



THE MODERN JOB.

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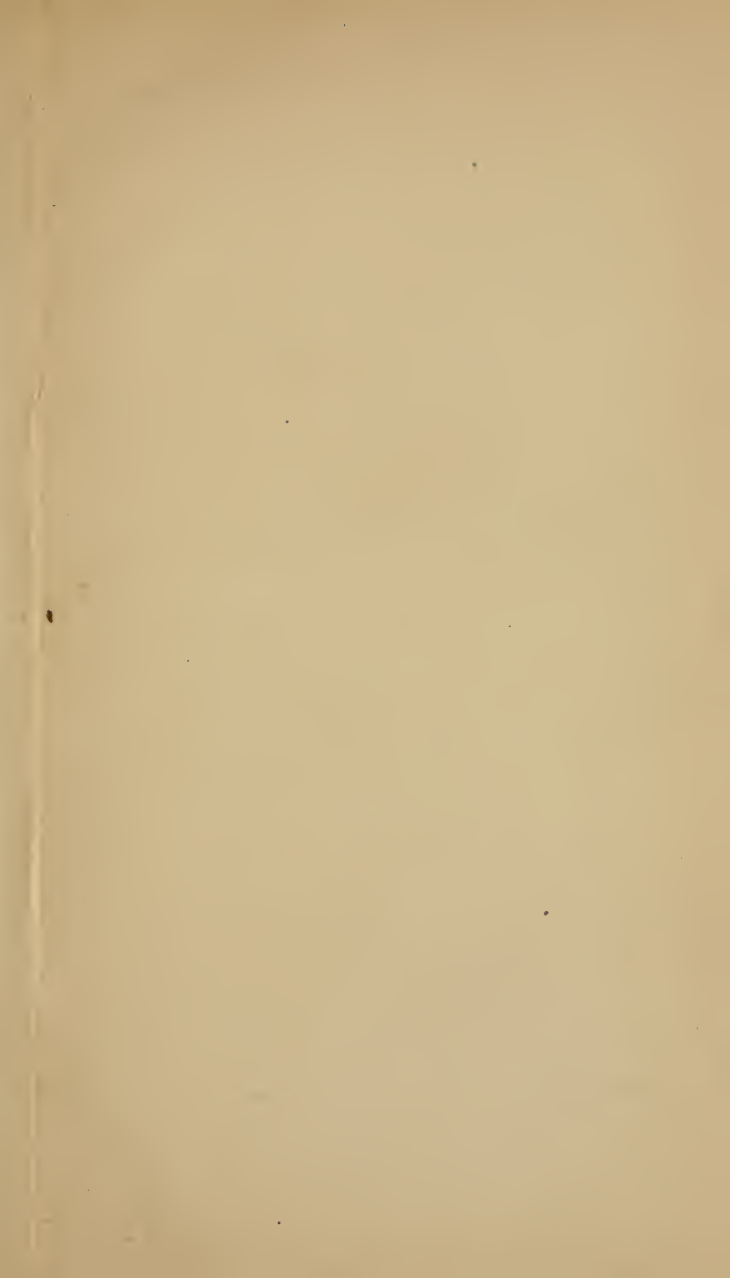
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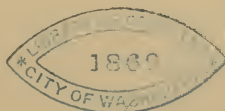
THE MODERN JOB.

#6656

BY

HENRY PETERSON.

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.”



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PART I.



JOB.

The pleasant county of Montgomery,
With rolling waves of hills and valleys green,
Fruitful of grains and grass, and virile ores,
And drifts of gleaming marble, lies serene
Along the Schuylkill, in the land of Penn.

There lived Job Goodman. Good he was by name,
And good by nature. In that olden day
When surnames took their rise, and names meant
things,

Doubtless some man through whom he drew his life
Had stood pre-eminent for truth and love,
And was by acclamation hailed the good.
And mating wisely through the generations,
The good blood still retained its virgin red,
And pure as water was, more rich than cream,
And fuller of life than wine !

And virtuous lives
Had brought their usual fruit of worldly store ;
Job was as prosperous as he was good.
For goodness clears the mind and makes men wise.
Upon a gentle knoll his mansion rose,
While round it stretched the landscape far and wide—
Green fields and meadows, orchards and tall woods,
Dotted with flocks of sheep, and herds of kine—
And looked the lovelier that he called it his.

But all the wealth of flocks, and herds, and fields,
Job counted nothing, when he sat at eve
And looked upon his children—and on her
Their mother, Margaret, sweet pearl of wives !
Four sons, like tulip-poplars, straight and tall,
Three daughters, sweet as apple-trees in spring,
Which with their rosy bloom enchant the air,
Had come to overflow his cup with joy.
Yes, his cup did run over—to the poor,
To the afflicted, to the maimed and blind,
To all men, rich or poor, in health or pain,
It overflowed as from a fount of love
That could not be exhausted.

But did Job
Give no thanks to the Giver? Job gave thanks—
But oftenest not in words. “ I am but steward.
Freely have I received, freely I give.”
Thus spake he when the Pastor of the church

Upon the hillside, took him once to task
Because so good a man should be so lax
In church attendance. "Words and forms, my friend,"
Job said, "to me seem little. See that tree.
Nothing it says from year to year, and yet
How grand a tree for apples! That is talk,
I take it, to some purpose. Does it praise,
Or not, the gracious Giver? As for me,
I often think that I have holier thoughts,
More thankful ones too, when on Sunday morn
I walk about my fields—the grass so green,
The sky so blue, the air so fine and fresh,
And the sun shining down so like a god,—
Than when immured within a pent-up church,
Stifling and hot, and longing for fresh air
Through prayer and psalm and sermon."

Therefore said
Some of the very "pious"—using words
To their abuse a little—that this Job,
Though a good man, as men are counted good
By the wide world, was not in truth religious—
Only a moral man; true to his word
Unto the smallest letter, so his bond
No stronger was; benevolent of course,
A prince for that—and very kind to all—
A brother to the sick, the blind, the halt,
The kindest of all neighbours and the best;

But not religious—not the proper ring
Exactly to his metal—could not speak
The shibboleth like the true Gileadites,
But was in fact of Ephraim, even though
He seemed so good and true.

But they were few,
And not the best of men themselves, some thought,
Who judged thus harshly. Others warmly said,
Job is a good and even a perfect man,
If man be ever perfect. You forget
He had a Quaker mother, and from her
Has fairly drawn a strain of Quaker blood,
And worships more in spirit than in form,
As she did—who herself was all a saint,
A woman fearing God, and loving man.

And thus Job lived, in happiness complete.
At peace with all men, and with his own soul.
With loving wife—who looked up to his face
As if to her he stood in place of God—
And sons who revered and loved their sire,
And daughters fair who loved and revered him,
And friends and neighbours who all held him dear,
And trusted him with what they valued most.
And health was his. No form of fell disease
Had ever sought his home and entered in,
Nor touched his fields or herds. Radiant and bright
Above his dwelling hovered holy Peace

And sweet Content, and warned all ills away.
It seemed as on the lintel of his door
These words were written :—

MARK YE NOW

THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD YE THE UPRIGHT ;
FOR ALL HIS PATHS ARE PEACE !

THE SOLITARY.

Within the shadow of a gloomy wood,
That towered above its mouldering, moss-grown roof,
Stood what was cottage once, but now a hut.
Here lived—he said himself he did not live,
But only rotted—desolate and alone,
A dwarf, misshapen, ugly, proud and fierce,
And hating all men, most of all himself,
Named Judas. Such at least the unholy name
He said was his, when certain years before
He suddenly appeared, and made his lair
The old hut in the hollow—"haunted hut,"
As fearful rustics called it;—would have bought
Both hut and land. But Job, who owned the land,
Struck to the heart with pity, said, "Not so;
The hut and land are worthless. Damp the hut,
And open to the storm. There is a cot
Upon the other side of the ravine,
Both new and sunny, and on fertile soil,
Take that and freely—gift it is, or sale,
Whichever suits you." But the dwarf frowned black:
"Keep you your gifts, my friend, and your advice,

For those who want them. I'm no beggar, man!
I ask you will you sell the hut and land.
They suit my fancy. Why? That's my affair.
If you will, name your price—if not, so be it,
And I'll go further. But I like the spot.
'T is pleasant as a grave." Job's face grew sad;
He thought a moment, and then calmly said,
"Yes, I will sell. Ten dollars is the price.
Not one cent more nor less." And so the field
Was deeded unto Judas—a cold fear
Creeping through all when first they heard the name,
And heard how like a fiend the dwarf had laughed,
As it had burst like lava from his lips.

And there he lived, alone and undisturbed—
For few were bold enough to brave his eyes,
Stern as an eagle's—shining like live coals
Amid gray ashes—or that scornful face,
Seamed and distorted, doubly so in rage.
His natural wants were few—a garden plot
Showed signs of care, and fishes in the creek
Were plenty; and he also seemed to draw
At times from some far point, sufficient means
Of maintenance for such a frugal life.

Shunned thus by all, or nearly all, around,
Guarded by dread and superstitious fear
From the chance visits of the curious crowd,
He faded from the common thought and talk,

Save when by some fresh token brought to mind.
Three months before the time of which we speak,
The loveliest child of Job, his Miriam,
A maid of eighteen summers, wandering by
The river, where the slothful flood was deep,
Had stumbled and plunged in, and must have drowned,
Had not the dwarf, who happened to be near,
And heard the plunge, come rushing up, and saved
The girl's life even at peril of his own.
Great was the talk—for once the dwarf was praised;
While he was furious—snapped the father short,
Thrust back all thanks, and curst himself a fool
Not to have let her drown. And so the end
Seemed worse than ever—he was dubbed a fiend,
O'ermastered for the time by Providence,
Possessed by angels for one holy deed,
And then left, howling to be thus o'erpowered—
The spirits rending him as they passed out.

SCENE I. *The DWARF standing at the door of his hut in the summer morning, and beholding the prospect.*

DWARF.

I like this place. There's no deceit about it.
It does not whine "All is created good,"
And smile, and smile, and smile, while all the time
It knows the world at heart an infernal lie.
See that cold mist which curls along the ground

Like a white snake, or like to the pale horse
We read of in the Apocalypse of John,
Self-called the best-beloved—the modest John !
It cries disease, and pestilence, and pain,
And aching joints, wrung sinews, and racked heads,
And makes no promises it does not keep.
And this damp shade too—fierce and black it scowls,
As if the portal of some murderous prison,
Say this vast world, where torture is the rule,
And men are punished most for being men
Such as their Maker made them. Aye, I like
To live amid the honest truths of life.
I hate those sunny shams.

Pshaw ! I 'm a sham
Myself, and like the dark, because I am
A creature of the dark—misshapen, foul,
Hideous—a blotch upon the day. Oh ! Oh !

But who comes here ? Now by that star of the world,
Sweet Miriam, if 't is not the new preacher.
He hates a Jew no doubt, as all men should,
That is all Christian men—but fain would bring
A lost sheep back to Israel ; p'uck this brand
Even from the burning. Ha, ha ! Let us hear
What the poor fool will say.

[*Enter the* REV. PAUL PRATER.

PAUL.

Good-morning, brother.

JUDAS.

Good-morning, brother Judas.

PAUL.

My name 's Paul.

JUDAS.

You called me brother, and my name is Judas.

Therefore I called you Judas—or perhaps

You like Iscariot better.

PAUL.

Oh, my friend,

How could you give yourself that awful name?

JUDAS.

Men do not name themselves—at least 't was not

The custom where I came from.

PAUL.

Ah, my friend,

You would impose upon me. Surely now

Your father's name was something else than that.

JUDAS.

He was a worse than Judas—he did worse

Than murder with a kiss.

PAUL.

My friend, I know

Your father never had that awful name,

And never gave it you.

JUDAS.

Perhaps you 're right.

Perhaps I had no father. Do you think

That one like me could ever have had a father?
I doubt it.

PAUL.

Ever had a father! Why
All men must have been born, or else not live.
And how be born without a father?

JUDAS.

How?

Easy enough. Science has made that plain.
I understand it all—yes, just as well
As if I had been there. And first I was
A pleoplasm—

PAUL.

What?

JUDAS.

Listen and learn.

At first I was a monad—smaller than
The speck of dust which gets into your eye.
And only stomach—nothing else but stomach.
Ha, ha! and so the first thing was a stomach—
And I believe the last will be a stomach.
That is why guts so carry it in the world!
Then I developed slowly—in the course
Say of a million years—

PAUL.

Hush, hush, my friend.
That's very wicked—for this earth we know,
Is but six thousand years—

JUDAS.

I have the floor,

Or, better, pulpit—nothing 's like a pulpit
To have your say, stop other people's say.
Don't interrupt me; Christians should have man-
ners.

Where was I? Ah! say in a million years
I then became an oyster—not of course
A smooth, good-looking oyster like yourself,
But a rough, seamed and crooked one. You know
That take a man, cut off his legs and arms,
And I suppose his head, though as for that
It can't much matter as a general thing,
And lo, you have an oyster! Do you doubt it?
Read scientific works—

PAUL.

Beware of science—

Falsely so called—

JUDAS.

Hush, hush! You break the thread
Of my discourse. And then, some millions more
Of gradual ages gone, I do believe
I devil-oped into a tadpole! Then a seal.
And after that a great sea-elephant.
And floating thus on cakes of ice, I soon,
Say in the course of twenty thousand years,
Lengthened my limbs by use, and grew a bear.

PAUL.

A bear !

JUDAS.

Oh yes, I 'm certain of the bear.
I 'm only half your height, but what a grip
I have now in my arms. Just see how long
And sinewy they are, beneath their mat
Of tangled hair. I know that I could take
A man like you inside them, and he never
Would drop out thence alive.

PAUL (*glancing uneasily about him*).

I do not doubt it—
Not in the least. I know well, my good Judas,
You must be strong—yes, very, very strong !

JUDAS.

Well, once a bear, I emigrated south,
And having luck, it surely did not take
A half a million years to build me up
Into a monkey,—say a wise baboon ;—
And then into a stupid Hottentot
Was only one of nature's steps in the dark.
And after that 't was easy—for you see
I am a cross even now 'twixt the baboon
And cannibal savage—and I sometimes fear
If I should catch some person all alone,
Some nice, fresh, juicy person, I should fling

Myself upon him, drag him to my hut,
And kill, and cook, and eat him! Y-a-h!

The DWARF gives a horrible cry, and moves slowly towards the MINISTER, who suddenly turns very pale, makes a spring backwards, and then goes off at a half-run, glancing occasionally behind him, to see that he is not followed.

DWARF (*grinning*).

It's very nice to hunt up the lost sheep,
But not to find a wolf! Pshaw, what a stick!
When that man was created, sure a good
Oyster was spoiled. But what a tale he'll have
For his next Sunday's sermon.

Ha, what's this?

By hokey-pokey, it's as good as a play.
First one and then another—in one day too.
I wonder if there is a comet about?
As sure as Thee and Thou, and Yea and Nay,
It is that Job. I know his measure too—
One-fourth say Quaker, one-fourth Rationalist,
One-fourth good Orthodox, and one-fourth Fool.
Only one-fourth a fool! why he's a sample,
A paragon—and on the whole I think,
Rather the best developed specimen
Of that progressive monkey, Man, my eyes
Have ever encountered. Tut, tut—he will need
A treatment somewhat different.

[*Enter JOB.*

JOB.

Good-morning, neighbour.

JUDAS.

Pah ! "neighbour !"

JOB.

Yes—my neighbour's surely he
Who does me good, or whom I would do good to.

JUDAS.

Neither will I do good, or suffer good.
I am sufficient for myself—there rest.

JOB.

You know not your own heart. Once you did save
A child of mine from the un pitying flood—
A life more dear to me than my own life !
You may forget it—but I never shall.
No, never !

JUDAS.

What a fuss over that girl's life !

If I had thought a moment, by the lord
Of this world, Satan, I had let her drown.
Besides, what good in saving her ? She'll do
Tenfold the mischief living. How those eyes
Will lure men to their ruin—like the lights
So soft and weird the foolish traveller sees,
And follows to his death. How men will wind
That long hair round their necks, and strangle them
In foolish coils of love. Out on the witch !

She is a cheat, like all the rest of them.

A cheat, a cheat, a cheat!

JOB.

Art done—at last?

Why man, I am not angry. It is too
Supremely foolish. Miriam! my sweet,
My darling Miriam! She is as true
As yonder heaven. And you know it, Dwarf;
You know it well.

JUDAS.

What if I am a dwarf;
Must I have that flung ever in my teeth!
Must I be told that I am gnarled, misshaped,
Ugly, deformed—made unlike other men—
Fit only for their scorn, and women's scorn!
Curses on all! the father who begot me,
And her who bore me! Curses, tenfold curses
On him who made such issue possible—
Who flung me down thus marred, 'mong other men,
To be their jest and scorn and hate—and pity!
He is not good who did this—is not just—
I hate him, and defy him!

JOB.

Blaspheme not!

His ways are not as our ways. He is good,
And just, and wise, and in his own good time
Will make all even, give the afflicted rest.

JUDAS (*recovering his calmness by a strong effort*).

I've heard that talk before. It oftenest comes
From men of happy lives—your comely men,
Your prosperous men, your men with loving wives,
And sons and daughters of beauty. The old rats
Who have a hole in the cheese, and stop at times
Their feeding long enough to turn about
And squeak, "Be quiet—what's that noise about
Out there, you wicked grumblers?" Ha! but it's
A rare world!

JOB.

There is truth in that, I own.
My lot, I know, for one, has been ordained
Beside the pleasant waters. Oh, my neighbour,
Forgive me if chance words of mine have smitten
Some secret sore, that quivers to the touch.
I thank the Lord for all that he has given,
Well knowing I am not than other men
More worthy—only favoured greatly more.
And as I can I share with other men,
Holding myself a simple steward, and not
The owner of the good gifts of the Lord.

JUDAS.

There's no harm done. I have no secret sore.
I'm made of knots and gnarls all over, Job.
There's no soft, tender wood about my frame,
Or my soul either—if there is a soul.

But you said, "Do n't blaspheme." What's blasphemy?

JOB.

To question thus the goodness of the Lord,
His truth, his justice, and abiding love
For man his offspring—that is to blaspheme.

JUDAS.

Who is the Lord?

JOB.

The maker of this world,
And all therein contained. He is the Lord.

JUDAS.

This universe is not one little ball
Of wretched earth, with a round sky above it,
And some bright lights to keep a pack of men from
Stubbing their toes in the dark? Eh, my wise Job?

JOB.

This universe of worlds is as the sands
On the seashore for number. Grind this globe
To finest dust, and of each tiny grain
Make a new globe, and still the count
Of this vast universe would not be reached.
How thick the heavens are spread with starry worlds,
As we look upwards in clear, frosty nights—
Shining and scintillating—each to each
Seeming so near, and yet as far apart
As we from them. And I have heard, oh Judas,

That were our vision keen enough to see
What God has placed there, all the mighty dome
Would look so packed with stars, 't would be one blaze
Of living light—the whole sky, as it were,
One vast, arched roof of fretted fire. Great God,
That men should doubt thy being and thy wisdom,
Knowing all this! or thy Almighty Power!

JUDAS.

Do n't get excited, Job. That 's pretty good
As a piece of declamation—but you know
Men reason, boys declaim. Just hear me out—
I had not made my point. This globe, we 'll say,
Is but an atom in the universe.
No larger, as compared with the great whole,
Than the two Russias subject to the Czar.
Now mark me. If the Russian peasant looks
Up to his Czar as to the lord of life,
Whose word is rightly law, and who should be
Implicitly obeyed, and to the death—
And if that Czar can bless, or can destroy,
As pleases him, the lives of millions of men,
Does the mere having of that power imply
That always it is used as power should be
Used always, for the good of each and all?
Answer me that—do n't quibble like a saint,
But give me the answer of an honest man.

JOB.

I never quibble. Solid and firm thus far
I hold your ground to be—although I note
Where you would lead me.

JUDAS.

Aye, of course you do.

You 're not a fool, or why waste time in talk.
But answer. Why then may not he you call
Your God, but really be the mighty Czar
Of this small globe? Because he has the power,
How does it prove that he does use it well?
You judge the Czar by his fruits—that's gospel law—
Why not the Czar of Earth? The earth is full
Of pain and suffering—either he has power
To help it, or he has not. If he has not,
Why then he's a small sample of a God;
And if he has, and will not, he's a Czar,
Who some day should be punished—shall be punished
If Justice ever reigns—not a good God!

JOB.

Let God be true, though every man's a liar!

JUDAS.

Oh yes, and thus the Russian boor would say:
“Thou Czar art just—whatever thou may'st do.”
That's not an answer, man—that's only fudge!

JOB.

The Czar is man, and God is the great God!

We cannot question him, the Infinite !
Who made this world, and all the mighty worlds,
And thus is proved to be of infinite might
And majesty and wisdom, why he does
This thing or that ! or judge his providence—
Which reaches from a past eternity
To an eternity to come, and yet
Is ever present, one eternal Now—
As if 't were possible to measure it
With our inch rule, and our few inches' sight,
As we would do the workmanship of man !
No doubt I often puzzle much my horse
And dog with my strange doings. But these brutes,
So-called, are modest when compared with man.

JUDAS.

How quick you saints succeed in getting up
A righteous indignation ! One would think
That anger were an attribute of saints.

JOB.

I am not angry. I am only earnest.

JUDAS.

Well, well—no matter. I'll be earnest, too.
As the great Doctor said, you shall not have
The advantage of a stamp in the argument.

But to the point. I say you beg the question.
And I will prove it. Mark—we must not call
The evil doings of this Czar of the Earth

In question—for, you say, he is not Czar,
But the eternal and supreme Almighty.
That is what 's to be proved—what I deny.
In the first place, the appearances are against it;
Things are not managed in this world as well
As Wisdom Infinite would manage them.
So far as we can see, the Almighty works
By agencies, and never of himself.
You rule your farm—kings rule the continents—
All rule imperfectly o'er men and beasts—
Inflicting pain in folly or in sport,—
Having their power to do so, we will grant,
From the Eternal Power. And why forsooth
Should not this globe be ruled in the same way?
And all the other myriads of globes?
Why should not each its special ruler have—
A lesser God—subject to err as man is?
You know the book of Job the Uzzite says—
(May you ne'er have such boils—and comforters!)—
That one day came the “sons of God” before
The Lord, and Satan with them. As for Satan,
All own him Prince of Darkness, Lord of Evil,
A God in the world of spirits. Who were those
That also came—the “sons of God,” so-called?
They were not men. Why not then subject Gods?
Rulers of Earth, and Jupiter, and Mars,
And all the unknown planets that revolve

Around the untold myriads of suns ?
 Through the material world we find gradation,
 Continual gradation—link above link—
 Grade over grade—from monad unto man.
 Does it cease there—and leap at one quick bound,
 Or in a thousand bounds, to Highest God ?
 Tut ! it 's not reasonable.

JOB.

The Scripture says,—
 “In the beginning GOD made heaven and earth.”
 And I believe it.

JUDAS.

And all learned men say,
 The word translated God is plural in
 The Hebrew, and should read “the *Gods* made heaven
 And earth.”

JOB.

Yes, but that means, as others say,
 The Three in One—the Christian's Triune God—
 The Father, Son and Spirit ! unto Whom
 Be Glory, Power, and Praise eternally !

JUDAS.

Well, three is pretty good for a beginning.
 If three, why not three thousand ? Really you
 And I are not so far apart.

JOB.

Hear thou,
 Oh Israel ! The Lord our God is *one* God.

JUDAS.

Of course the Jews held that. And they were not
To worship other Gods,—but keep themselves
To their own God, Jehovah. But this proves
They held belief that other Gods there were,
Whom their own mighty God was jealous of,
And would not have them worship, under pain
Of awfulest penalties. Just as one king
Forbids his subjects to obey another.
Jehovah would be thus their only God—
Would not divide his power with any one,
In Israel or without. Read the Jews' book
With your own eyes, and it will tell you this.
In after years, I own, among the Jews,
As 'mong the Greeks, the notion of one God,
Ruler supreme of all the world, grew up
And thrust aside the old belief. And then
The Jews, as they do now, believed in One,
Great, undivided God! Men do not think
What parvenues our orthodox people are,
The mushroom growth of only yesterday,
And how those infidels, the Unitarians,
Have the old faith of the world, which David held
And all the Prophets.

JOB.

An even older faith
Worshipped dull stocks and stones—and sacrificed
Young children to its god.

JUDAS.

Yes, Abraham
Was not too good or wise for that, and yet
Your preachers praise him for it! One may steal
The ripe fruit, and another man be hung
For looking over the wall. But I beg pardon.

JOB.

Abraham erred in ignorance, but in faith,
And God instructed him in better ways.
So Christ, the incarnate God, instructed us.
He bade us serve the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit. Were there other Gods,
As you surmise, he would have told it us.
That there should be gradations were not strange,
But if none be, the fact outweighs all dreams.
And at the best, between the highest grade,
If such there were of Gods, and the Great God,
Would be a chasm as infinite almost
As that between the Angels and the Highest,
Whose praise they ever sing and speak and act
In one sublime accord!

*JOB stands a moment silent, and then, taking off his hat, and
looking upwards, continues.*

Eternal Spirit!

Who mad'st this world, and all the rolling suns,
Faint emblems of thy brightness, give me faith
To feel that thou art good, and always good!

I thank thee for this life, so sweet and pure ;
 I thank thee for thy mercies manifold—
 For health and strength, for kind and loving friends,
 For my dear children, and the wife of my youth,
 For Miriam, sweet solace of my age—

The DWARF's lips quiver.

For all the unnumbered mercies thou hast poured
 Into my cup, until it runneth over !
 Weak and ungrateful should I be, oh God,
 If I forgot to praise thee with my heart,
 Or failed to vindicate thy ways to man.
 For thou, Lord, art most holy !—and thy mercies
 Are over all men—and thy righteousness
 To children's children !

JUDAS *flings his cap to the ground, and stretches forth his
 right arm towards heaven.*

JUDAS.

And now hear me ! O thou who rul'st this world
 As with a rod of iron—be thou Supreme,
 Or only, as I judge, a son of God—
 For what should one like me, fall down and thank thee ?
 Shall I give thanks that thou hast given to me
 This crushed, distorted body, from which men
 Recoil as from the plague—and even children
 And pitiful women shrink from ? Take it back !
 I want it not. I curse it and abhor it !
 Shall I give thanks for life ? What has it brought

To me of good, of happiness, or joy?
Cursed be the day that I was born—and cursed
The hour my mother smiled because a man
Had come into the world! Thanks then I have not.

But I arraign that Power, however high,
Which placed me here in this infernal cell,
To bear the torture of a desolate life,
As guilty of a crime beside which murder
Shows white as an infant's brow. I brand it here
As worse than sacrilege, more vile than lust,
And of all tyrannies the most a tyrant!

For I am punished thus without a cause,
And even without a hearing—for some crime
Or foolish fault of father or of mother—
Or, it may be, some cruel whim of power,
Thirsting for change, craving deformity
To give a zest to sated appetite,—
The love creative having turned to lust,
And made me thus its victim and its scorn.

However it may be, I here arraign,
As I will do hereafter—if there be
A life beyond the grave—him who thus called
My spirit into being, and gave it this
Foul tenement to inhabit. If there be
Justice in that world—there is none in this—
Justice I will demand from star to star,

And through the courts of heaven, and through the
depths
Of hell, but I will have it!

Turning to JOB.

Put my thanks

In the same boat with yours—and send them up,
And see which call the thunderbolts down quickest.
Of course were I the comeliest man around,
The richest too, and if I ne'er had trouble,
And if I had a loving wife and children,
And Miriam, for my child—and a good word
From everybody and for everybody—
Why 't would be very different—that is all.
You can't expect the dog that gets the soup,
To yelp out like the cur thrown in the river.

JOB.

I'd say I pitied from my inmost heart,
As I am sure God pities and will pardon
You and your wildest words—but 't would offend you.
But as for me—I may not know myself—
No man is sure of that—and yet I think,
Were I to lose what now I hold most dear,
And stand on earth in utter want of all
My heart delights in, still from out my lips
Would come the words of deep, submissive trust;—
The Lord hath given, and he hath taken away,
Yet blessed be the Lord!

A low sound of distant thunder is heard.

But see, a storm
Is coming up, and I must hasten home.
I wish you 'd let me put a better roof
On this old house of yours.

JUDAS.

House! It's a kennel—
But good enough for a dog—or a baboon.
Good day, friend Job. And mind that the old fellow
Above there, does n't take you at your word.
He is a sly old rascal—and just good
Enough for that.

[*Exit JOB. As JUDAS stands gazing at the heavens, there is a vivid flash of lightning, followed at once by a thunder crash. A tree has been struck, a short distance from him.*]

JUDAS.

B-a-h!

[*Enters his hut.*]

SCENE II.

A glade in the woods. MIRIAM seated on a rock, weaving a circlet of wild flowers. A large Newfoundland dog at her feet.

MIRIAM (*sings*).

Who is free is happy,
Who is happy free—
Lightly roamed Perdita
Over hill and lea.

Who is sad is fettered,
Who is fettered sad,—
Slowly treads Perdita
Over hill and glade.

Who has hurt Perdita?
Dimmed her eyes of blue?
Perdita! Poor Perdita!
Naughty Love—'t is you!

[*Enter DWARF.*

JUDAS.

A very pretty song that—and well sung—
But shockingly bad sentiments.

MIRIAM.

Thank you, Judah.

JUDAS

(*throwing himself on the ground, beside the dog, which leans up against him, evidently recognizing an old acquaintance*).

What would the reverend Paul have said, I wonder,

If he had heard it? He would hurt no one,
I think—not even Perdita.

MIRIAM (*laughing*).

The good Paul
Would hurt no one, I think—not in the heart—
Not even Perdita.

JUDAS.

Not the less folks say
He goes to Fairview oftener than to church.

MIRIAM.

How could some people live without such talk?
How many horses do you think were tied
Out on our lawn last evening?

JUDAS.

Twenty-five?

MIRIAM (*laughing*).

Not quite so bad as that. But fifteen men,
Young men and old and middle-aged were there,
To see my brothers, sisters, and myself.
I look to hear yet that I am to marry
The whole of them.

Changes her tone.

I who shall never marry.
Why should I marry? Leave my father dear,
The noblest man of men, who loves me as
The apple of his eye, core of his heart,
Soul of his inmost soul—and go off with
Some silly minister, or vain young fellow

Who knows not his own mind. No, as I am,
I am content. And I shall never marry—
No, not upon this earth!

JUDAS (*after a pause*).

You dropped a rose.

Hands it to her.

Your garland 's nearly done.

MIRIAM.

'T is for a friend.

You 'll see when I have finished. Is it pretty?

JUDAS.

Very.

MIRIAM.

See, it is finished. Hold your head up,
Sultan! What do you think of that?

Hangs the wreath around the neck of the dog.

Ah, Sultan,

You look as proud as a king; and thankful as
A lover ought to look. See Sultan's eyes!
How full of love and reverence they are!
Do n't you believe that dogs like him have souls,
Worthy the making and the saving, Judah?

JUDAS (*putting one arm around Sultan's neck*).

I think this dog has a far nobler soul
Than half the brutes who go upon two legs,
And call themselves by the grand name of man.
Ah, yes, you understand what I am saying,
Sultan—and thank me for it with your eyes.

What man will do more for a friend—or for
His God—than die for him? Sultan 'll do that
For you or me at any hour of the day.
Is love the highest attribute of man?
Sultan's is love till death. Is reverence?
The highest being Sultan knows is you,
And you he worships with a faith sincere.
Is duty? Sultan 'll do what he thinks right
In face of famine, struggle, danger, death!
Fidelity? The name of that is Dog!
Then if there be no virtues, howe'er high,
No attributes of spirit, which the Dog
Does not possess like man, and to as great
A height exemplify;—why then it follows
As sure as night the day, that if the soul
Of Sultan can go out—an expiring candle—
When the earth-life is gone, so can the soul
Of man, who proudly boasts himself immortal.
If one be a mere attribute of matter,
Say like the luminous glow of rotten wood,
Why then the other light is just the same.

MIRIAM.

And so it seems to me. I ne'er could think
That the good God made anything to die.
Even these fragile flowers I sometimes think,
Cannot but bloom again in fairer climes.

But now that Sultan's been rewarded—what
Say you to this?

*She draws a woven chain of hair, to which a cross made also
of hair is attached, from her bosom—and bends forward,
and clasps it around the DWARF'S neck.*

Will you wear this, for my sake?

JUDAS.

I'd wear the cross—and crescent—and the orb
Of the Fire-Worshippers—and the sacred bull
Of Egypt—and aught else thus woven of
The living gold of the ascending sun!
What shame though thus to waste your glorious hair
On such a cur as I.

MIRIAM.

Had it not been
For you, this hair had been all soiled with sand,
And now within a coffin, under ground.

JUDAS.

Pshaw—that was nothing. I by chance was there,
Instead of Sultan. He had done the same,
And done it better.

But why did you weave
This ugly cross of these resplendent strands?
Why not a glowing star, to suit your name,
Or tender heart, or any other charm?

MIRIAM (*in a low voice*).

Because I'd have you learn to bear the cross

In patience and in reverence—nor rebel
Against the fate ordained by God.

JUDAS.

“ Ordained

By God ! ”—so much the worse then. Listen to
My tale. My mother, as I ’ve told you, was
A native of the East—of Palestine—
A woman of the kingly tribe of Judah—
Judah ! that is a lion—tribe of David,
Of Solomon, and him whom you adore,
Jesus the son of Joseph. And I told
How that she called me Judah—all the same
To Jewish ears as Judas—but a crown,
To Christian ears, compared unto a curse.
I did not tell that she was false to her race,
And to its laws, and married with a gentile—
A man born in this Western world, who cared
For claims of race and sect, as oft he phrased it,
“ Not as much as a continental damn.”
A handsome man, and full of energy,
A regular Norse-King—and kind withal,
When not too full of drink. But that ’s the rock
On which he split. Too soon my mother found
That once a week or so, she had a fiend,
And not a man, to deal with. And one day,
To cut it short, he felled her to the floor
And stamped upon her in his drunken wrath—

Great God, upon my mother—on his wife :

The DWARF rises, and begins to pace the ground.

Some three months after that—a child was born.

It was the child of wrath—it was a curse,

And not a blessing. For two happy weeks

They kept it from my mother, on pretence

Of this or that, fearing the shock would kill.

But then she grew impatient. How she shrieked

When first she saw me ! Oh, eternal God—

Couldst thou do this—or suffer it to be done !

Hideous—misshapen—such as I am now—

But even more hideous in a babe—a babe !

That ought to look as one just out of heaven.

Was it a wonder that I killed my mother—

The sight of such a monster ? Was it strange

I killed my father ?—flying to his drink

To still the serpent writhing in his breast.

“Ordained by God !” How can a Being, good

And infinitely mighty—full of love

And tenderest compassion, as you say,

Suffer such things beneath the azure heaven

And on the vaulted earth ?

MIRIAM.

This sore affliction,

Which is but for a moment, in the count

Of the eternal ages, may work out

An enduring crown of glory !

Mark the plough,
How in the Fall it tears up the close sward—
Crushing the flowers, despoiling all the field
Of its soft green, and leaving to the eye
Apparent ruin—ugly clods in place
Of polished grass. And then the harrow's teeth,
Crushing anew and tearing. He might say
Who saw no more than this, some wicked power
Was working out its will. But all, we know,
Is merely to make ready for the seed,
Which in due time the husbandman shall sow,
And which shall soon spring up, and bring forth fruit,
When in the July sun the winds shall roll
O'er the wide field its thousand waves of gold.

JUDAS.

Deep has the ploughshare furrowed into me—
And fierce the harrow of men's scorn has torn me.
I am the field Aceldama—field of blood—
From which shall spring up vile and poisonous weeds,
Thistles and nettles. Never to me shall come
The vernal grasses, or the pulpy wheat,
Or aught that gladdens the sad heart of man.

MIRIAM (*rising*).

Never! Nay, speak not thus! This earth may pass
As doth a vapour, but the eternal word
Never shall pass away! Within my soul
I feel the spirit of God. It bids me speak.

Judas, dwarf, man! I have a message for thee!
 Look on my face—does it not shine like Moses',
 When he came down from Sinai? Awake! arise!
 Thou art the worm in its cocoon. Thy wings
 Are slow unfolding. Thou may'st doubt the world—
 Darest thou doubt me! I tell thee 't is for good
 Thou art afflicted, tortured. Thou shalt be
 A grander angel for it. Live for this!
 I tell thee, who all ready am for death—
 Live thou for this! Live, and prepare to—LIVE!

A voice is heard calling: "MIRIAM!"

I come, oh Lord!

*The voice is again heard: "MIRIAM!" She recovers as from
 a trance.*

It is my father's voice.

May God be with you, Judah. Fare you well!

[Exit MIRIAM.]

JUDAS.

Now, by the eternal Splendour, when did eyes
 Of mortal man ever see sight like this!
 Aye, her white face did shine as it had been
 An angel's, and her hair a glory seemed.
 Not Miriam the Prophetess, when she sang
 The triumph over Egypt, how the Lord
 Had thrown the horse and his rider in the sea—
 Nor Esther, when she saved her people from
 The sword—nor wronged Lucretia—no, nor she

The Pythoness of Delphi—nor the Sibyl
Who at weird Cumæ spoke the words of Fate—
Nor Joan when first she led the embattled hosts,
Her sword all flaming in her queenly hand—
Ever looked more inspired!

And was she not
Inspired? Surely if God had need to speak,
Where could he find a purer messenger?
Her words too were like lightning-bolts which cleave
The heart of the solid oak.

He takes the cross in his hand.

She made me this—
Me—poor, despised me—a cur, baboon,
By the side of other men—and by her side,
A Caliban, a monster! She is fair
As one of the angels—if such things there be;
Fairer I think than any angel is.
She made me this. What if her words are true,
And in some nobler world I may cast off
This devil's livery, and stand forth erect,
A child of God? My spirit is as strong,
To do and dare, and even to endure,
As other men's—my thoughts as subtle are;
I know my mind is far beyond the herd
Of common minds in power of grasp, and width—
And why not then, this husk all thrown aside,
A spirit among spirits, should not I

Appear even as I am—comely and strong?
But, comely!—how is that? Is my soul comely,
Or has it grown deformed with hate and wrath?
Would I look like to her—if both were spirits?
She is as sweet and gentle as the winds
That blow in June—hot August I, or Winter.
Something 's in that.

And this then is the cross
She said that I must bear—to act as if
All were done right—not thinking all is wrong—
But trusting that, whene'er the plan 's worked out,
It will be seen to be the very best.
Perhaps so. She 's a Queen, and says it is.
Perhaps so. She 's a Saint, and says it is.
She is inspired, if ever woman was.
If I 'd not seen, I never had believed—
But I have seen. 'T will do to think upon.

Kisses the cross.

I 'll kiss the cross—though I kiss not the cross,
But this resplendent hair.

Conceals the chain in his bosom.

Go next my heart,
And give it life. If there be devils foul,
I 'm now secure. No fiend could take me hence,
This piece of heaven about me.

[*Exit* JUDAS.]

PART II.



AFFLICTION.

Who sees a gallant ship sail proudly forth,
Her streamers flying, all her sails ashine,
The current curling high around her prow,
And the long line of polished wave which marks
Her pathway down the harbour—and e'er thinks,
To-morrow, by this hour, that ship may lie
A wreck upon the waters, a mere log,
Rolling at mercy of the unpitying winds?
Yet, many a ship goes thus unto her death;
At morn an ocean-eagle, and by night,
The mere dull driftwood of the careless seas!

Twelve months have passed, twelve long and bitter
months

To Job and to his house. The curse of God
Seemed to have fallen upon him. First came death,

And quick disease—like to the pestilence
Which rageth through the day, and then at night
Still rageth. Drought and rust and barrenness
Blasted his fields. His flocks and herds, with rot
And foul distempers laid them down and died.
The Money Kings to whom his wealth was loaned,
Proved beggars in disguise. And all he touched
Withered to dust and ashes.

Miriam,

His star-eyed Princess, was the first to go.
If she had stayed, all might have lived secure
In her angelic presence—so thought one
To whom the holiest spot upon the earth
Was her rose-covered grave. But the fair skin,
And crimson glow, and the impassioned soul
Are not theirs who live long, but theirs who live
A long life in a short one. Better thus! .

Then came the spotted fever, and swept off
Job's wife—and then, as with quick lightning strokes,
His other children. Daughters and brave boys,
One coffin after another, down the stairs
Was carried,—till the neighbours shunned the house
They once had sought, and his hired servants fled—
And the last coffin down the stairway came
Borne by himself and Judas, who alone
Went with him to the grave, and laid it in,
And covered it with earth.

And Job was forced
To sell his homestead—and from head to foot
Great boils broke out upon him. And his hair
Turned silver white—and on his comely face
A constant look of pain, and in his eyes
A weight of woe, were seen. And his tall form
Of old straight as an arrow, now was bent ;
And he went tottering about the house
And looking into rooms which once were bright
With glad young faces, only to cry out,
“Woe, woe is me! the hand of God is heavy
Upon me, as on him of old. Oh, that
I could but die!”

And now, within his porch
Job sat for the last time. The next day, he
Would come to whom his lands were sold, and take
Possession. And Job groaned in spirit, when
He thought of all the happy days of youth,
Manhood and middle age which sanctified
The mansion of his fathers—and which now
Had gone forever. And the evening hour
Drew nigh. Then slowly up the garden walk
Came Judas.

[Enters JUDAS, and flings himself down on the porch steps.]

JUDAS.

Well, what of to-morrow, Job?

JOB.

Foxes have holes, and birds of the air their nests,
But I no place have now to lay my head.

JUDAS.

You 'll come with me then, Job, until you 've found
Some hole that suits you better. By the way,
I 've shifted quarters. I 've grown tired at last
Of that old den in the swamp,—and taken now
The cottage on the other side of the wood.

JOB.

For me ?

JUDAS.

No, for myself. I want to lie
And bask at times, old-dog like, in the sun.
There 's no sun in that hollow. How 're your boils
To-day ? It is about time they had broken.

JOB (*groans*).

I am a mass of fester and corruption.
Oh, Judas—would to God that I were dead !

JUDAS.

Pshaw ! be a man ! you will get better soon.
The Doctor says so. Every boil, he says,
Is worth a dollar. I 'd sell out your lot
To him at half that price.

But who comes here ?

The Reverend Paul, and with him Reverend Calvin !
Now we shall hear the gospel and the law
I have no doubt—and with a vengeance, too !

See how that old owl, with his yellow eyes,
Comes trampling down the flower-beds.

[Enter REV. PAUL PRATER and REV. CALVIN HELFIER.

BOTH.

How do, Job?

JOB (*tottering to his feet*).

Good-evening, friends. Will you walk in the house,
Or take seats here? The evening air is pleasant.

REV. PAUL.

'T is pleasant here—besides, the house may be
A trifle still infectious.

They take seats.

REV. CALVIN.

Job, my friend,

We come this eve upon a sacred mission.
Can such misfortunes gather round a man,
And buffet him as with a demon's claws,
And it mean nothing? All the pious souls
Of our community are asking this—
And all but hear one answer. When a man
Is given up to Satan—'t is because
He has deserved it. God is just and good,
And will preserve the Righteous from all harm;
But woe unto the sinner—for his sin
Shall find him out, though no man know of it.
What secret sin thou hast committed, Job,
Thou knowest, and thy God. We do not know,
Nor care to know. We only cry, Repent!

Lest a still harder fate be thine to bear
In the eternal, fiery depths of hell !

[JOB *groans.*

Those boils, I know, are painful—but they 're naught
To the fierce pains which rack the sinner's bones,
And tear his joints apart, and eat his flesh
With a continual cancer, when this life
Is over, and the Hour of Mercy, too.
Repent then, Job, now while it is the day ;
For the night cometh—and there is no hope
In death, nor in the grave. Confess thy sins.
Haply the Lord may wash thee in his blood,
The atoning blood of Jesus, and thy crimes
Though red as scarlet, and the crimson dye,
Be made as white as wool !

JOB.

Since I have been
Stretched out upon this rack, I have thought much ;
And I have backward cast my eyes along
The past, even unto my boyhood's years.
And yet I see no sin that I have done,
Nor any deed, which were it to do again,
I would wish different.

REV. PAUL.

Oh perversity
Of the vile human heart !

JOB.

Why should I lie
Unto the Lord? He knows that what I say
Is simple truth. I've done no wrong. And then,
On the other side, I've tried to do the right.
What beggar ever went hungry from my door,
Deserving to be fed? How many times
I've erred—as men should blunder if at all—
Upon the side of charity! Have I locked
My treasure up, and hardened thus my heart
'Gainst my own flesh? And in the ways of peace
Have I not walked, and rather chose
To suffer wrong than do it? You should know
How from my youth up I have always lived
In love towards God and Man. If I have not,
Bring my accuser forward. Let him say
What man I have defrauded—what sad house
Of fatherless and widow I have entered,
And made more sad. What labourer I have kept
From his due hire—what neighbour ever wronged—
What wandering stranger I have failed to set
At my full board, and bade him eat his fill.
Aye, even what dog, or cat, or cow, or horse,
Or sheep within my gates has met with wrong.

REV. CALVIN.

I come not, Job, as thy accuser, but
Thou hast condemned thyself; yes, even in this

Too-warm defence. Thou failest in reverence.
To justify thyself 's to censure God!

JOB.

God is all Truth. To tell the simple truth
Then, cannot be to censure him. For me,
I shall maintain my own integrity;
Knowing in this I do but serve the right,
And that the man who serves the Right, serves God!

REV. CALVIN.

Oh heart of Pride! oh stubborn, foolish heart!
Rememberest thou not, Job, how God's great law
Thou didst despise—forgetful of his Sabbaths,
Lax in attendance at his sanctuary
On his most holy day—careless of rites
He has ordained by his incarnate Son;
Wandering afield when good men were in church,
And on the nights of prayer, chatting at home?
Thou who in house and barn had been so blessed!
Thy sufferings are no wonder. It had been
The wonder if these awful punishments
Had not thus come on thee and on thy house.

JOB.

Which is a man to do, what he thinks right,
Or what his neighbour tells him? If the last,
Which neighbour? Shall he heed the Romish priest
Upon the hill—

REV. PAUL.

No, no—he is the man
Of sin!—the child of the scarlet woman! Job;
Keep clear of him!

JOB.

He also says the same:—
“Keep clear of Paul and Calvin! Come to me!
Our Church is founded on the rock of Peter,
Christ gave to him the keys of heaven and hell,
And promised that it should endure forever—
Aye, to the end of the world!

“Behold it stands,
Having the Promise, like a mighty Temple.
The winds do beat upon it—and the waves
Do smite it—Kings make war, and Peoples war
Against it, but it stands, and still will stand
Until the Saviour comes again—this time
As the triumphant God!” So says the Priest,
Father Ignatius. He has a large church too—
The largest in the county.

REV. CALVIN.

He is himself
A child of hell and of perdition—how
Can he save any one? His talk is but
A tissue of idolatry and lies!

JOB.

But still I ask, how is a man to judge

Between you and Ignatius? Each one claims
To have the truth.

REV. PAUL.

Why, exercise your reason.
Reason was given for that.

JOB.

But then suppose
My reason tells me that you both are wrong;
And that the highest Truth lies somewhere else?

REV. CALVIN.

True, honest reason never will tell that.
Folly, I grant, may.

JOB.

But what can I do,
But use my reason, even such as it is,
And act according to it? If it be folly,
It's not my fault, who do the best I can.
I have no choice, it surely seems to me.
I can do nothing else—go right, or wrong,
For if I exercise no power of choice,
Then if I stumble right, it profits little.
But I in fact *must* always choose my course.
The only question is, Shall prejudice,
Or whim, or the mere accident of birth,
Or fear of neighbours, or dull love of ease,
Dictate my choice—or shall I use what sense,
And show of reason I may chance to have,

Be that however small, and honestly choose
 Between the various creeds and forms around,
 That creed and form, or no-creed and no-form,
 Which my best reason—poor even as it is—
 Approves as wisest, truest? That's the question.

JUDAS.

You have them there, Job.

REV. CALVIN.

Peace, unsanctified!
 Conceived, and shaped, and born in hideous sin,—
 You have enough already to atone for,
 Without thus seeking to draw down another .
 To dark perdition with you.

JUDAS.

Beg your pardon!
 I thought that this was a free fight. But Job
 Himself is one too many for you both.

REV. CALVIN (*to JOB*).

We have our reason—blessed gift of God!
 We also have the Bible—sacred Word!—
 Another blessed gift! These two can never
 Speak in a different language, for they flow
 From the same fount of Truth. That Bible says:—
 Keep ye my Sabbaths holy!

JOB.

But some say,
 That word was for the Jews—not Christian men.

And full three-fourths of Christendom does not
Hold to your view. Historians have said
The early Christians did not. Which is right,
Which wrong, is not just now the question.
The question is—Who's to decide for me,
For Job, what Scripture really says? And here
We come to the old point. I must decide
Myself, because no other course is possible
Unto a man who means to be a man.
The only question is:—Shall whim, or birth,
Or prejudice, or fear of what men say,
Decide it for me—or shall I decide,
By my best thought, in all sincerity,
And honest love of Truth? For me, I think
That a just God will rather pardon him
Who honestly goes Wrong, doing his best
To find the Right, than he who finds the Right,
Not seeking for the Truth, but seeking only
For wealth and ease, or for the world's applause,
And to be calléd Rabbi.

REV. CALVIN.

There's your error.
And you may see in your afflicted state,
The answer mercifully given by God—
Who would not any sinful man should perish,
But all return, repent, and live.

THE TRUTH

Is the important thing—not how you get it.
Error the unholy thing, which not the best
Of good intentions ever can make good.
The floor of Hell is paved with good intentions.
Are you in the right road?—that is the question.
Not how you got there—or why are you there.
Does the path lead unto the heavenly city—
Or does it lead to hell? What matters it
What your intentions are, if you be bound
Straightway down to perdition?

And the road

May best be known by what you meet therein.
Men do not gather grapes of thorns and briers,
Or figs of thistles. When you turn your steps
Towards the gates of hell, you meet with thorns
And briers and nettles sharp, that sting the flesh
And warn it back to God. Judge where you are,
Oh Job, by your sharp torments. Turn then back!
Harden no more your heart, but bow your head
In dust and ashes; and the Lord, our God,
May even yet accept and pardon you!

JOB.

I thank you, friends. I know you mean me well.
I am a wearied and afflicted man.
My brain perhaps is duller than of old—
And I may think less clearly. But it seems

To me that the intention and desire—
Not any special path—must ever be
The road that leads to Heaven or to Hell.
Whatever a man may do—even though he make
His child a sacrifice unto his God,
As Abraham would have done—so that it be
Done in a loving and a reverent spirit,
After full thought, and as the best result
Of the best reason God has given to him,
That is the Right for him—and is the road
Which will lead him to heaven ; although it might
Lead other men, with better light and guides,
Into perdition. Thus it seems to me.
As for these briers and thorns which pierce my flesh,
As worse have done my heart, the Narrow Way
Often abounds with such. Or am I wrong ?
For who were they were mocked, and scourged, and
stoned,
Were sawn asunder, and were clothed in skins,
And driven to dens and caves, and burned with fire,
Wanderers by sea and land, and crucified,
Of whom earth was not worthy !
Who was he,
Whose head was wet with dew, and wet his locks
With droppings of the cold, inclement night—
The man of sorrows, and acquaint with grief,

Of whom it ne'er is once said that he smiled,
Though it is said he wept!

REV. CALVIN.

The difference is,
That these all suffered from the hand of man—
Not from the hand of God. God will not bind
Free Agency in man, not even to save
His own anointed from such cruel deeds.
But loss of children, blight, distempered herds,
Painful disease, are all the work of God—
His judgments! therefore just and righteous all—
Not like the cruel wickedness of man.
The Saviour suffered at the hands of men.
The Prophets also. David for his sin,
Was punished sore—by fell disease and death;
Gehazi smitten with a leprosy;
And Ananias and his wife for lying,
Were stricken dead!

JOB.

And yet we also read,
That a blind man was brought one day to Jesus,
And he was asked:—Was this man then a sinner,
Or was his father such, that he was born
Thus blind?

JUDAS.

A funny question. Could the man
Have sinned before his birth?

JOB.

The answer was,
That neither he had sinned, nor yet his father—
But that the power of God might be in him
Made manifest.

REV. CALVIN.

Oh, yes ; a special case,
Made for a special purpose. For we read
That then he healed him. And Christ went about
Healing diseases—but, mark this, he said,
Even while he healed—“ Repent, lest a worse ill
Be fall thee.” Could *we* heal we would.
We cannot heal, but we can cry Repent,
Even as he did.

JUDAS (*aside*).

No, they cannot heal—
That 's very certain !—but they can keep up
A devil of a crying—or a cursing.

JOB.

There was a man whose name was like to mine.
And he was perfect and upright, and feared
His God, and eschewed evil. There was none
Like him in all the earth. And yet that man
Was dashed to the ground ; his sons died sudden
deaths,
His flocks were burned with fire of God from heaven,
And he was smitten in his bones and flesh.

REV. CALVIN.

Are you a perfect man? And did you send
 And sanctify your children, and rise up
 Early, and offer sacrifices unto God,
 According to their number, saying,
 It may be that my sons have sinned this day,
 And cursed God in their hearts. We read that this
 Job did continually.

Oh, the puffed-up pride
 And rank perversity of man! He wrests
 Even the holy scriptures, meant to warn,
 Unto his own destruction. Pray then, Job,
 First for an humble spirit. Let thy woes
 Soften thy flinty soul. A gracious God
 Will not despise an humble, contrite heart.
 But he will break thee into pieces if
 Thou wilt not bend—and cast thy fragments out
 Of filthy righteousness upon the dung-hill!

[Enter PHYSICIAN.]

DOCTOR.

How are you, Job, this evening? Flushed and hot—
 I fear you have been talking overmuch.
 You must take care. I dread a spell of Typhus.
 If you're not very careful.

JUDAS.

Oh, these friends,
 His comforters, have just been giving Job

Something that 's worse than Typhus—a small dose
Of hell-fire and of brimstone—smoking hot!

REV. CALVIN (*to* PHYSICIAN.)

We are the Doctors of the soul, as you
Are of the body. If Job live or die,
Is but of small importance, as compared
With his eternal welfare. We must do
Our duty by him, as the elect of God,
Whether he live or die—that so his blood
Be not upon our garments, in that day
When a just God shall judge the quick and dead.
Good evening, Job. Think well of what we 've said.
Repent, Repent!—and be forgiven of God!

JOB.

Farewell, my friends—for such you think you are,
And I do judge all men by their intentions.
I 'll think of what you 've said. And do you think
Of all that I have answered. Fare you well.

[*Exeunt* REVS. PAUL and CALVIN.

DOCTOR.

It grows late, and the evening air blows cool.
Let 's go inside. Come, Job, and lean on me.
I think you 'd better lie upon your couch,
And rest a little.

They go in—JOB leaning on the PHYSICIAN's arm.

Now, compose your mind,
And try to rest. I 'll mix you a sweet draught,

Which will, I think, secure a good night's sleep,
And bring you pleasant dreams.

*Mixes a draught, and gives it to JOB. Then motions to JUDAS,
and they both go out into the porch.*

DOCTOR (to JUDAS).

These ministers are very curious fellows—
Sincere, but superstitious past belief.
And how they muddle up the simplest things!
If a man slips upon a melon rind,
Some careless fellow throws upon the path,
And breaks his leg—straight 't is a Providence;
As if the infinite God would plague himself
With such small matters. So if lightning strikes
Where it is most attracted, say some tree
Or metal which it loves, and men are killed,
That is beyond all doubt a Providence
Of the most undoubted kind. Stupendous folly!

The world is governed by great General Laws.
You keep one law, that law will keep you, too.
You break another, you must take the pain.
A bad car-wheel is made—that wheel will bear
A certain strain before 't will fly apart.
Time and the car roll on—the moment comes
When the flawed wheel will split. It matters not
How good or bad the passengers may be,
And whether bound to conference or race,
The wheel will fly apart, and some be killed.

Perhaps the best of them—if so they sit
In the most dangerous place.

Because men keep
The law of morals, 't is no reason why
They shall be saved if they unwisely break
The law of physics. Let me give a man
A dose of poison—whether he gets well
Depends more on his stomach, and the state
Of his digestion, than on purity
Of heart and soul. And ten to one the sinner,
As saints are now—their livers all inert—
Would stand the better chance.

JUDAS.

Of course the saints
Should be the ones to die—for they are fit,
Men say, for heaven. That sea-captain was right,
Who when his ship was going swiftly down,
Kept back the ministers for the last boat.

DOCTOR.

As for this case of Job's, 't is plain enough.
Among the other Laws, is one most plain
Of Imperfection, ripening into Death.
All things grow up, mature themselves, and die ;
And when most perfect, then the bitter seeds
Of Imperfection are already swollen
Almost to bursting. Why, we all do know
That when the tree has reached its utmost height,

And broadest sweep of branches, it will soon
Begin to dwindle and decay. And thus
The fairest fruit is scarcely ripe an hour,
Before the rot sets in. 'T is so with men,
With nations also, science, literature,
Sculpture and painting—when they 're at their best
The hand of Death 's already at the door.
Why, build a strong man up by proper food,
By exercise and air, until you have him
A perfect body and limbs—strong as old Samson,
And graceful as Apollo—then beware,
For he may die to-morrow! For the heat
Which has developed strength and perfectness,
Has ripened too the quick seeds of decay.

This has become a proverb. Men will say,
“It is too good to last”—and picture Fortune
As with a wheel. Because, or quick or slow,
Change, in this curious world, from good to bad,
From bad to good, from perfect to imperfect,
And back again—and thus forever on—
In circle or in spiral, is the Law
Pre-eminent among the eternal Laws.

Why then should suffering not encompass Job,
Prosperity forsake him? Shall the laws
Of this great Universe, be put aside
For him and his? Five generations, say,
They have lived here, and prospered. Like an oak

His race has stood, and weathered many a storm ;
But, as all know, the oak must fall at last,
And no one wonders. Why then this fool's cry
All through the county, when Job's time has come,
And he falls crashing to the ground, as if
There were some special wrath of God in it ?
As for the lower causes, like as not,
The Goodmans as a race, their cattle too,
Have been too richly fed, from sire to son,
For several generations. Thence at last,
Come typhus fevers, rank distempers too.
For one extreme of diet 's just as bad
As the other. And in this whole region round,
If they will eat rich meats, and eggs, and fowls,
And fine white bread, and pies, and take no care
For vegetables and for cooling fruits,
For berries and the salads of the Spring,
Why, mark my words, they every now and then
Will have a plague rage through them—which their
priests
May say is sent them from the angry Lord,
But which will simply be the sad result
Of their own folly. Why the best of men
That e'er existed, if he will not eat
The proper food to build him, bone and flesh,
Must crack and give way somewhere. Else the Lord
Would have to work a constant miracle

To keep his saint in health. He gives him brains
Just for this very purpose—and then sends
Suggestive aches and pains to nudge his brains.

JUDAS.

Well, Doctor, that 's not bad. I like to hear
You talk—your voice has quite a manly ring
After the cawing of those crows. But still,
Do you not think you cram a deal too much
Of the Eternal and the Infinite
Into your small pint measure—your tin cup?
You dip me up a pint from out the sea—
Certainly 't is sea-water, the real stuff—
But, Doctor, seems to me 't is not exactly
The same great ocean I behold out there,
Rolling in effulgent splendour.

DOCTOR.

I 'm a plain
And common-sense, matter-of-fact man, Judas.
Imagination plays men many tricks.
I tell you what I see—it stands to reason.
God's laws are still the same—as in the twig,
So in the tree, and course of suns and stars.
There is no mystery, except to men
Who hear the wind, and call out Mumbo-Jumbo.
And as the generations onward pass,
Old Mumbo-Jumbos are found out, and men
Laugh at their fathers' idols. But they still

Invent new Mumbo-Jumbos for themselves,
In superstitious folly, and fall down
And worship what their sons soon in their turn,
Shall laugh at.

Do you stay with Job, to-night?
'T were better some one should.

JUDAS.

Oh, yes, I 'll stay.

In fact, 't is too much trouble to go home.
I 'll fling myself down somewhere. An old dog
Like me, can sleep on any mat or rug.

[*Exit* DOCTOR.]

DOCTOR (*to himself*).

Now that dwarf, Judas, ugly is as sin—
Save that his eyes are brilliant as a toad's,
And his brow, scarred and dark, is broad and high—
And yet I scarcely know what Job and I
Should ever have done without him. Well, perhaps
He 'll go to heaven before some godly men,
Or men who are called godly. As for me,
I know the Saviour went about doing good,
Healing diseases—and I have respect
Only for goodness of the practical kind,
Something that sets a leg, or heals a sore,
Or puts food into empty stomachs, clothes
On naked backs.

JUDAS (*alone*).

As daylight fades away,
And night comes on, the stars begin to shine.
We see thus farther in the night than day.
How Venus 'gins to glow. Oh, glorious star,
It is not strange that men have worshipped thee.
Thou art like Miriam—peerless! All around,
Like eyes, come glimmering out thy kindred orbs.
And these are worlds!—a multitudinous host
Of grand and distant worlds! each swinging round
In its majestic course with mighty hum,
As it cleaves through the subtle ether which
Fills up the abyss of space. I sometimes think
I hear that mighty music, when the roar
Of this our world is hushed, as it is now.

Takes out the chain of hair.

This is her hair—most silken, radiant hair!
Have angels hair more beautiful and soft?
This very hair has clustered round her head,
Fed on her precious blood, was part of her—
Is part of her—still fragrant with her life.
She said I might become, if that I bore
My patient cross, a nobler angel for it.
Perhaps this soul of mine, when death shall come,
And loose me from this form of brutish shape
Shall spring up to the stature of a man,
Well-formed and comely, such as they were both,

My father and my mother. And perhaps
I may within the courses of the suns,
Grow worthy—partly worthy—even of her!
I can but try. Grow soft then, marble soul,
And let the sculptor mould thee into shape,
Such shape as he would have thy body be
In the hereafter—such as might beseem
Divine Apollo, or Adonis fair,
Or David in his prime, whom women loved.

Oh Miriam—I know not where thou art,
But where thou art is heaven. Look down on me,
And help me in my task. Let me but see
The hem of thy white robe—and I shall follow
Wherever it doth lead.

After a pause.

The Doctor's draught
Seems working finely. I will take a look
And see how Job is sleeping, ere I sleep.

Enters the room.

PART III.

THE VISION OF JOB.

Job had that night a vision—or a dream.
Who can say which it was? Perhaps a dream,
Springing from what he 'd heard, what he had thought
Not many hours before—and clothed with life
By the unconscious working of the brain.
Perhaps that subtle drug the Doctor gave
Had wakened visions such as those which come
'To Hasheesh eaters in the Indian lands,
Or Opium-drugged Chinese, haggard and pale,
Yet roaming in the spirit like a god.

But unto Job it seemed, and always seemed
Until his dying day, that he had known
The things that came to pass—as sober facts,
Not the mere coinage of a wandering brain.
And while his reason doubted, as the mind

Will always doubt where there is room to doubt,
A voice within his soul e'er seemed to say,
"Doubt not, oh Job, but have thou faith in that
Which thou hast seen and handled, of the life
Which is above this life, and in the Truths
Given thee there for guidance and support."

It was about the mid-hour of the night,
When Job awaked from sleep. A wondrous calm,
And sweet content seemed to possess his soul.
In perfect harmony his being lay,
And a strange sense of fullest happiness
Rested upon him—till he thought, I now
Know what the great Apostle meant, by Peace
Which passeth understanding. This doth mine.
It is most heavenly—yet without a cause,
So far as I perceive. Perhaps it is
Some angel hovers near me. Here, soft lips
Seemed pressed to his, and soft arms closely clasped
Around his neck. It was the kiss of Miriam.

"Come!" said a voice. "The Lord has need of
thee."

Then Job arose. He felt no pang of death,
And yet what seemed his body lay beneath,
As he arose, and seemed to glide, and glide,
Up through the air, and up, up, towards the stars.
And all this time he felt his hand in hers,

His daughter's. Till at last there came a pause.
"Now I must leave thee, Father. Do not fear.
Remain thou where thou art."

Job seemed to stand
In the mid-air—and all around was dark.
Till suddenly a light began to shine,
And then come near. The sunlight seemed to break,
And birds to warble round him, grass to spring,
And flowers to bloom, and all was like a morn
In rosy summer—save a weird and subtle light,
Like that which follows oft a day of storm,
Enveloped all things. Then a form drew near,
Majestic, noble, such as Job had dreamed
A man might be, if man were perfect made.
All dignity and sweetness were combined
Within his face—man's wisdom, woman's love,
And something still more radiant even than these.
And Job knelt down, and covered o'er his eyes,
And said, "My Lord, and God!"

"I am thy Lord;
But not thy God, oh Job. I Michael am,
Archangel, and the Ruler of thy world,
And thus thy Lord. Now rise, and stand upon
Thy feet. For with thee I would this day talk
As man with man."

And Job arose, and said,
"Thy servant listens."

MICHAEL.

I have known thee, Job,
Since thou wert first. A perfect man thou art
In thy degree—and, tried even as with fire,
Thou hast not faltered, but hast kept the faith
According to thy light—nor man, nor angel,
Can e'er do more than that. What wouldst thou now
That I as Ruler of the world should give thee?
The Past of course is past—but still thy years
May many be on earth, and happiness
May once again bloom sweet around thy door—
The cattle on a thousand hills be thine—
If so thou willest.

JOB.

Great ruler of mankind,
If, as thou sayest, all the Past is past,
And must perforce be past, I claim no boon
To drive its sacred memory from my heart.
In place of happiness, I fain would have
The bliss of being and of doing good,
And thus to live as they would have me live
Who now are with the angels, as I know.
I would ask Knowledge, Wisdom—such as men
Most need to build them up to higher thoughts,
And to the stature of the perfect man,
And nobler, worthier lives.

MICHAEL.

What wouldst thou know?

JOB.

Thou art not God? I thought God ruled the earth.

MICHAEL.

God rules the earth, but rules it through his Powers,
As he rules all the planets and the suns.

Think of this world of spirits—could we rest
In slothful weakness by the heavenly streams,
We, fuller of life than men are, and who tire
Never of action? Men can not rest thus.

How then can Angels, sprung from mortal men?

Or higher orders, Seraphs, Archangels,

Rulers o'er Powers and Principalities,

And higher still, who stand around the throne,

The Princes of the Presence, and o'erlook

With vigilant care the whole domain of God?

Men surely dream, not think like wakeful men,
When they imagine heaven less full of life,
Action, and thought than earth!

Now, mark me, Job!

I tell thee that I, Michael, though I am
Archangel 'mong the Angels, and a chief
Among the Cherubim, ne'er saw the face
Of God!

JOB.

Ne'er saw the face of God!

MICHAEL (*solemnly*).

God reigns

In infinite degrees of space and thought
 Above this sphere of mine. I strive to grow
 In wisdom and in goodness, and in power,
 Which always springs from these in heavenly spheres,
 That so I may attain a nearer place
 To the Divine Perfection. Ages hence
 May see me still only what now I am,
 Or they may see me wiser, and advanced
 Up to a higher state. I hope the last—
 But wisdom always is content with good
 That it already has, even while it strives,
 And rightly, towards perfection's highest mark.

JOB.

Not see the face of God!

MICHAEL.

This universe

Is infinitely vast—beyond the thought,
 The largest thought, the wildest imagery
 Of man, or even angel! Look! oh Job!

MICHAEL *waves his hand, and the walls of space open—and*
Job beholds myriads of flaming suns and glittering planets
and spheres—a huge network, as it were, of infinite splen-
dour. He looks for a brief instant, and then sinks down
overwhelmed.

Thou seest but a globule in the vast
 Immensity of things! And yet art dazed!

The millionth part would smite thee to the brain.
 Wonder not then, if thus the mighty works
 Of the All-Wise transcend all human sight,
 That even Angels could not gaze upon
 The brightness of his presence, and yet live !

JOB.

Forgive my folly ! 'T was like gazing on
 Ten thousand suns !

MICHAEL.

It was the price of wisdom.
 What other wouldst thou know ?

JOB.

Teach me, oh Lord,
 How best to live—how best to worship him,
 The Highest !

MICHAEL.

I can teach thee, Job, the way
 I deem the best. We angels also differ—
 Though not as men—without their ire and heat.
 Remember, Job, angels are never perfect.
 No one is so but God. Wisdom is still,
 Even with us, a matter of degree.
 The Cherubim are said to know the most,
 While Seraphs love most. Be it so or not,
 Some Cherubs and some Seraphs wiser are
 Than others of their class. Free Agents, too,
 We all are, just as men. To think and do

Wisdom or folly, what is right or wrong,
As men have power—yes, and a greater power
Of choice than men have. I now rule thy earth,
Somewhat as thou didst manage, Job, thy farm,
Or as a king his kingdom. But my power
Is bounded by the Laws of Life and Death,
And I must work within them. Much I can,
And much I cannot do. I influence men
And aid them through and by the powerful laws
Of spirit and of matter. This premised,
I answer now thy question.

To me it seems

That best to worship God, is to perfect
His work. To build up Man, the single man
And the whole race, unto the perfect mould
Of highest being. Make the Man complete,
In body, mind, and soul—harmonious
In his development—so that no part
May gain at the expense of other parts—
But body strengthen mind, mind strengthen it,
And both enlarge the soul.

This is my Thought,

Which I have striven to breathe, in various shapes,
Into the changing world. Behold my signs,
Strown through the Ages. For the mind of man
Forgets what is impalpable to sight,
And symbol needs, to hold him to the truth.

First of all symbols is the TRIANGLE ;—
For three a magic number is on earth,
And signifies the threefold nature of man—
Body and Mind and Soul, all leagued in one,
And Birth and Life and Death which include all,
And higher truths, more subtle and profound.

And then the SQUARE—sign of proportion true ;
And better still the CUBE, denoting depth,
And many-sided life. And then the CIRCLE,
Showing how Life is swallowed up in Death,
And Death again in Life—the Serpent's head
Swallowing his tail. Also the deeper sense
Of an harmonious culture, beautiful
And rounded like a STAR—such as the Greeks,
Those men of men, conceived and realized
In no small measure.

Then the glorious CROSS.
Emblem of Love which dies to save its friends ;
And more, its enemies. Token that none
Can reach the highest and perfectest state,
While those around him are degraded, vile,
And ignorant of wisdom and of love.
This is my latest emblem—and the best !
But now I give another, for the world
Is fully ripe for change. I take the CROSS,
And round it draw the CIRCLE. Canst thou tell,
Oh Job, the meaning ?

JOB.

Does it mean, oh Lord
 Of earth and man, that self-inflicted pain
 Is worthless?—that the devotee who scars
 His body with the thong, or hangs upon
 The pointed hook, or on his pillar lone
 Outwatches the slow years, has failed in that
 His pain conduces not to any good ;
 Much less the good of building up the race,
 Himself and others, to the perfect man,
 Harmoniously developed ?

MICHAEL.

Thou hast spoken well.
 Pain for the sake of pain is worse than folly.
 The Cross for the Cross' sake, is but a sign
 Of narrow vision. Therefore round the CROSS,
 I bid thee draw the CIRCLE—emblem bright
 Of Harmony and Beauty, and of Love,
 Complete, entire and perfect ; Emblem too
 Of the one great and Universal Faith,
 Which must include all others.

One word more,
 Before we leave these Symbols. What is that
 Thou seest yonder ?

JOB (*after a pause*).

I behold what seems
 A CONE—an immense DOUBLE CONE—one point

Rests on the earth—or is it but a cloud?—
The other end, though hidden by the mist,
Seems to tower up among the dim-seen stars.
Around its sides in circling grooves are cut
Vast spiral pathways, multitudinous,
One close above the other, along which crowds
Of human kind are moving—upwards some,
Some down and backwards. Some have almost reached
The middle course—but hold, now back they go,
As they had lost their footing. Gracious Lord,
What is the meaning of this?

MICHAEL.

This is the life

Of all that live Free Agents on the earth.
Life starts below, and circles up or down,
In the encircling spiral, back and forth,
Like the slow swing of a vast pendulum,
But ever a little higher, up and up,
Or ever a little lower, down and down,
With every revolution. At the top
We see Perfection—but the way is hard!

Now mark again the Symbol; for the Zone,
The DOUBLE ZONE, is but the solid CROSS,
Surrounded with its CIRCLES infinite!

Progress is thus the great, eternal law.
Progress or Retrogression! Oh, man! Job!
How I would bind men to the upward course,

The way of life, and still of fuller life,
 For each man and for all men, if I could !
 But I can only work within my range—
 The Eternal Laws and Man's Free Agency
 Bound in my will.

JOB.

But is there not some rule,
 Some law of life, compressed in a few words,
 Which well observed, would guide us on to Truth,
 And high Perfection ?

MICHAEL (*smiling*).

There is no such rule.
 And yet thy race is weak, and must have such.
 To learn a rule, and then a higher rule,
 Has been the best till now. But now the time
 Has come to try the Universal Rule—
 Which is that no one rule is universal.

JOB.

We have a rule we call the Golden one—
 Which wise Confucius spake—and after him,
 In greater fulness, our beloved Lord,
 Jesus of Galilee, the Son of Man
 And God :—"Do unto other men as you
 Would they should do to you."

MICHAEL.

A Golden rule
 Indeed ! And yet what evil and what harm

May not be done, and keep its every word.
There have been those who thought, there are such yet,
That Heresy should be crushed fiercely out,
Even by fires and dungeons. Such will ask,
Is it not better far to scourge the flesh,
And rack it with the screw or savage wheel,
Than leave the soul for hell? Therefore to save
The immortal soul they play the tyrant's part,—
But do no more to others, than they would,
In a like case, have others do to them.
If man were wise, and always understood
What were the best that other men should do
To him, he then might safely do the same
Unto his neighbour. As it is he fails,
Even when he best observes the Golden Rule.
And yet the rule is Golden, as compared
With any other.

JOB.

Then there is no rule?

MICHAEL.

How can there be? All things within the worlds
Of matter and of spirit, and man himself,
Are many-sided—not alone have length,
But breadth and depth. You cannot bound a field
With one straight line. Your Golden Rule is Truth,
But not the whole Truth—so with all the Rules
That men have faith in. Job, the time has come

To welcome Truth wherever it is found ;
 Within all Rules, all Creeds, all Forms of Faith,
 Religions old or new—to take from each
 What Wisdom shall approve, in firm belief
 That nothing that is False can be of God,
 And nothing that is True be not of Him !

JOB.

My race are Christian men !

MICHAEL.

How blind men are
 To their own likeness ! “ Mortal, know thyself ! ”
 Was written long ago—and here is Job
 That knows not his own people.

JOB.

Are we not,
 Then, Christians ? Pardon me, oh mighty Lord
 Of Earth and Man—I know I am but dust—
 But I speak for my people.

MICHAEL.

Speak as man
 Would speak to man. Have I not said it, Job ?
 Now, answer me !

The Christian Scripture saith :—
 “ If a man smite thee on one cheek, do thou
 Turn him the other.” Do thy people, Job,
 Ever do this ? And when the two are come
 Before the Judge, does he say to the smitten,

Thou shouldst have turned at once the other cheek,
As Jesus has commanded ?

JOB.

Oh, great Michael,
In this they act like weak and erring men,
But not as followers of the Prince of Peace.

MICHAEL.

The Master said :—" It has been said of old,
Eye for an eye, tooth for a broken tooth.
But I say unto you, Resist not evil.
If any man sue thee at law, and take
Away thy coat, let him thy cloak have also.
Love ye your enemies, bless them that curse you,
Do good to them that hate, and pray for them
That persecute you ! "

Do thy people, Job,
Resist their enemies ? If you are struck,
Do you strike back ? If some one takes your coat,
Do you give him your cloak ? And do you bless
The lips that curse, the hand that persecutes ?
How are you Christians then ?

And are your Laws,
Which represent the Nation and the State,
Made on the Christian model—or the Jew ?
Your law may not say Eye for Eye, it does
Say Fines and Punishment and Death for wrongs,
And thus is nearer Jew and Heathen law

Than Christ's. And yet on every holy day
 You read the words of Christ, and verily seem
 To think you do them. Is this so, or not ?

JOB.

Have I then all my life been in a dream?
 We surely are not Christians in our laws !

MICHAEL.

Could Christians go to war, and with each other ?
 Nations of Christians slaughtering each other—
 Perhaps in the name of Christ ! Perhaps for some
 Dispute as to what the Saviour said—or some
 Mere point of dignity, or so-called Honour—
 Or for some leagues of land, or trifling sum
 Of worthless gold, or to avenge some wrong,
 Fancied or real ?

JOB.

They could not, honoured Lord.
 I bow my head in shame. Thy words are true.
 We are not Christians—worthy not to call
 Our race by that high name. We are but weeds
 That grow around the Temple of the Lord,
 And boast us of the Temple—while the Lord
 Perhaps is even now saying to the Mower,
 “ Mow me now down those weeds ! ”

Oh, rotten faith !

MICHAEL.

Job, thou art Right—and Wrong. Thy people are

Surely not Christians—only so in part.

In part they are Heathen—for their roots do strike
Deep in the ground; and draw their substance forth
From Hengist and from Odin—from the Greek
And Roman—from the Jew—from Egypt wise,
From the Phœnicians, and the tribe of Cush,
From the vast nations too, whose very names
You have forgotten—sons of outlawed Cain,
Who perished not in great Euphrates' flood,—
From all the lore of these, as well as Christ,
The sap has sprung which feeds thy people's life,
And gives them form, faith, substance, makes thy race
What now they are.

Consider, Job, how Europe
Had lain for centuries in superstition,
With darkness covering all the Christian lands,
Until the light sprung up. Remember where?
In Islam—among the Arabs,—“infidels,”
As pious knights—who could not read or write—
Were wont to call them. And, mark well again,
With the rebirth of the great Grecian sages,
Heathen, so-called. Where had your Europe been,
Had I not lit its torch anew with fires
From realms celestial. Was that fire of hell,
Oh, Job, which lights the world even yet, and blends
Thus with the light of Christ! These Arabs, Greeks,
They too were children of my Lord, and wards,

Like you, of mine. Dost think one race alone,
Among the infinite multitudes of men,
Are dear to me, to God? All are the sons
Of the Eternal Father—all are dear
To Him. Whatever else I fail to know,
This I am sure of. For the power that gave
This Rule to me—the High Prince of the Presence—
Gave me command: “Let none escape thy care,
Not even the smallest; for the smallest is
A child of God—to whom they all are dear!”
But some I feed with milk, some with strong meat;
Some see as through a glass—of various shades,
Best suited to their eyes. Only a few,
Can bear to look at Truth, as face to face,
As I would have thee, Job.

JOB.

My eyes are weak—
My brain confused—but I will listen, Lord;
And write it down upon my inmost soul
For future contemplation.

MICHAEL.

Wisdom lies not—
In fullness and completeness—in any creed,
Or faith, or form of thought, or word of power
Which has been given to men. Thou seest now
Thy people are not Christians. Mark me, Job,
If they were only such, there were no gain.

Consider well. See what thy people owe
To Greece, to Rome, to Arab, and to Jew,—
And to their own wild branch of their great race,
The Aryans—men of honour from the first,
As history bears record ; and the race
Which leads, and always shall, the surging van
Of the onflowing World ! Throw this aside,
Fruit of a thousand roots, in Science, Art,
Sure Mathematics, art of Government,
All that does make men great—and let them live
By Christian thought alone—what poverty,
What narrowness of action and of mind,
What swift decay of nations, what o'erthrow
Of Right by powerful Wrong, of Truth by Error,
Would be the sure result ! But do I say,
The Christian Dispensation then is false,
Or void of Power and Good ? By no means, Job !
Christ's mission was to add unto the sum
Of Truth which then existed ; not to thrust
All Truth aside but his especial word.
New Revelations are to supplement
What Truth already has been given to man—
To modify some dangerous tendency,
Amend some natural error, and increase
The heritage of the world. Welcome the New,
But not therefore despise the sacred Old !
Have reverence for both. Where they conflict,

In whole or part, or seem thus to conflict,
You have your reason, and your sense of right,
To weigh what course is best. What seems like sin
In one age, Toleration say, is oft
The golden fruitage of the next. For times
There may be, when the lack of reverence
Promotes the cause of Truth. Then bow not down
Blindly before the authority of men,
However good they may be, or inspired—
Not even before the Prophets. Higher Powers
Will ne'er exact a base, unmanly crouch.
That assent which denotes the mind convinced,
Is all the truly Wise will value, all
That can be pleasing in the sight of God.

What then thy nation needs, is not to thrust
Old Truths aside, but temper all those Truths,
Not with the words, or the strict rules of Christ,
Adapted in the day when they were spoken
To his disciples—a small, powerless band
Of subject Jews; but not unto the men
Who rule great nations, and do lead mankind;
But temper all the Old, its public laws
And private usages, with influence sweet
Of Peace and Harmony, and kind regard
Of all for all and each, which flows from him,
Jesus of Nazareth, the Wise and Good,
As from a fountain of perpetual love!

And thus be you the heirs of all the Wise
Who have lit up the darkness of the world.
Prometheus who first taught the use of fire,
And made it common as the wants of man ;
And thus awoke the superstitious hate
Of ignorant priests—Earth's primal martyr he !
Confucius calm, whose spirit all serene
Still hovers o'er the Asiatic shore—
Who taught the wisdom of the Golden Mean,
And how superior men are formed, and live,
And was himself the high, superior man !
Pythagoras, who knew the harmony
Of numbers—and their power—and saw revealed
The Rhythmic chain which binds the rolling spheres.
And martyred Socrates ; and Plato grand,
With lips as honey sweet, that bees did love.
And Zoroaster, at whose ancient fount
Pythagoras drank, who saw the Dual strife,
The mighty conflict 'twixt the True and False,
Pervading all the world ; and gave the law
To Think and Speak and Act in Purity,
As Virtue's substance. And the mystic Budh,
To whom this life a vast illusion seemed,
All fleeting and all naught—a bubble on
The eternal waters, and a torturing wheel ;
The grandest height of goodness to be lost
Within the great and infinite calm of God.

And Abraham—the Faithful to his Light!
And Moses, meekest of the sons of men!
Mohammed, too, the first great foe of wine;
Who hated falsehood, and who loved the truth!
And all the Wise and Good of all degrees,
In every age, and under every sky.
These are the friends, and not the foes of Christ.
Each had his word of golden Truth to add
To the great total—mixed indeed, 'tis true,
With dross and dust. Yours then the constant task
To separate the fine gold from the dross
Of human imperfection. Human, said I?
Ah, imperfection is the general lot,
From more or less of which no spirit escapes,
Not even the angels. None is always wise,
And always good, but one—that one is God!

JOB.

Again thou sayest what my timid ears
Doubted before that they had heard aright.
What, can it be the angelic hosts are not
Perfectly wise and good? Art not thou, Lord,
Unerring in thy wisdom?

MICHAEL.

None is wise
Indeed, but one—and that is the All-Wise,
And the All-Mighty! Wise indeed I am
By low compare with men—but oft I stand

At the parting of two ways, in this my rule,
And doubt me which is best, until my brain
And heart do ache, not knowing what to do.

It is no easy task, oh Job, this work
To which I have been set, of governing
Thy fierce and self-willed earth. What with itself,
Its stern, imperious laws—its little crust
Of solid ground above a sea of fire,
Prolific of wild earthquakes, lava storms,
And rise and fall of mountains and of plains—
And then Mankind, Free Agents, upon whom,
Their varying plans, and changeful thoughts and moods,
No one can surely count an hundred years,
Even an Archangel, and one not least
Among his order, oft is burdened sore,
And ready to cry out, “It is too much,
Oh God, for any brain but thine!”

JOB.

And what

Answer will come to such a mournful cry?

MICHAEL.

The old, eternal answer : “As thy day,
So shall thy strength be!” Or, “My grace, oh son,
Is all sufficient for thee!” And ere long,
The burden passes, or it can be borne,
And a sweet, rapturous peace, beyond all thought
Of mortals for completeness, brings reward.

JOB.

That "parting of the ways." Forgive me, Lord ;
May I ask further ? It all seems so strange !

MICHAEL.

I've brought thee here to ask, and understand ;
Therefore ask freely. I will make it plain.

Four centuries ago, and Europe knew
Not of the wondrous Western hemisphere,
On which thou livest. But a few wise men
Deemed that the earth was round—and with one man
The thought became a passion. All the day
This mad Columbus dreamed of Asian lands,
Which might perhaps be reached by sailing West.
He was not rich—only through many years
Of ceaseless crying at the palace gates
Of powerful kings, could he the means obtain
To test his dream. No passing earthly force
Of human will, could hold him to the work
Which he must go through, or his purpose fail.

Then came the question—shall this man succeed,
Or be allowed to falter and to fail ?

Without celestial help from me and mine,

• He could not triumph. Was it well he should ?

A mighty question this. Consider, Job !

Here was a Continent—two Continents—

Inhabited by various grades of men,

All dear to me, to God. Some rude and fierce,

But others, as a whole, more pure and good,
Though not as wise, as Europe's powerful sons.
Parts of that world, the great, outlying Isles,
Were peopled by a race so meek and kind,
So gentle and so good, they Edens seemed
Beside all Eastern lands. What good might come,
What harm might come to these? How could I know?
Here in the presence of the Ever-Present,
I do avouch as I have always done,
And always shall avouch, I did my best,
Walked full up to my light—but whether well,
Or ill, unwise or wisely, to this day
I know not—ne'er shall know until that hour
When I give up this stewardship!

MICHAEL'S face is agitated with contending emotions.

After a pause.

Well I knew
That Europe's sons were bigoted and fierce—
Would be rapacious, cruel. But I thought
Such great success would bring a softer mood
Than unto them was usual. It would bring,
On the other side, the light of genial arts
And noble sciences, to those who dwelt
In darkness—even if 't were a happy night.
And more, the light of Christ, though covered up
Beneath a pall of gloomy, sad'ning fear,
Would thus be brought in gladness to a race,

Who being themselves so gentle, soon would learn
To separate the sweet Truth from the sour
And bitter falsehood round it.

Then, again,
The opening of a Refuge, fair and wide,
To all the persecuted of the earth,
In a new land, where tyrants held no sway;
With greater width of the unfettered mind,
And larger growth of Freedom!

So I thought.

And yet I hesitated—for the gate
Once opened, and no power of mine, allowed
To me to use, could close it fast again.
For fifteen revolutions of the Earth
Around its central sun, I thought of this.
I could not read the future, full and clear,
For man's free agency, as I have said,
Is an uncertain force—and where one force
Is thus uncertain, doubt must ever be,
Except to Infinite Wisdom. And again,
The deep, exceeding sinfulness of sin,
Is always more or less a new surprise
To angels, as to good and holy men.

At last I made decision, gave the word,
Touched the sweet soul of Castile's noble Queen,
Took down the bar, and opened wide the door.
Thou knowest, Job, what followed. What a fire

Of lust and greed swept through those Indian isles,
Blasting and blackening—how the red tribes fell
By tens of thousands 'neath the cruel yoke
Of Spanish masters, driven to the mines
And to the fields—that happy, innocent race!
And on the Main, in populous Peru,
And Mexico the happy, how the Spaniard
Went to the slaughter as unto a feast,
And piled the land with slain—and kept no faith,
Obeyed no law, save his own cruel will.
And then, the land unpeopled, how he tore
The Negro from his home, and tortured him
Through many generations—till the blood
Of the crushed millions cried aloud to God.

And so throughout, both in the South and North,
Was the land ravaged. And what is it now?
Yes, even at this day? What has been gained
By these three centuries of Christian rule?
Christian!—what mockery of the name of Christ!
Strife, constant strife, turmoil, weak governments,
Compared with which the Incas were a boon—
And thoughts of man and God, which scarce exceed
In height and width the wisdom of Peru.

Take your own portion of this heritage.
War from the first! and now, to crown it all,
This last great war of brothers of one blood!
The land all reeking with its crimson stains,

And hate exalted to a virtue rare,
 So that the tender women make their boast,
 On one side and the other, how they hate
 Those from whose views they differ. Was there not
 Sufficient Christian faith, and love, and wisdom
 Within thy land, to save the world this shame?

JOB.

We fought, oh Lord, we thought, an holy war,
 To save our land, to break the Negro's chain,
 And vindicate the Equal Rights of Men.
 Surely this was not wrong!

MICHAEL.

For every slave
 Whom you have freed, you've paid as high a price.
 Yes, higher far in gold, than would that slave
 Before the war have purchased. Why not then
 Have bought their freedom, in the hour of peace,
 Preserving mutual love—and saved this strife,
 This agony of wounds, and sickness sore,
 With lacerated hearts, and children thrown
 Orphaned upon the world? For not a man
 Has thus been freed, but what some nobler man
 Of your own race, has cruelly been slain,
 Either by sword or fever.

JOB.

Oh, great Lord,
 I would defend my people—for I know

How this sad war was forced upon my land.
Pardon me that I speak thus—but the South
Were led by men imperious and stern,
High-headed, fierce, implacable as death.
We had to fight them—either first or last.
The only choice was that of time—we chose
Their hour of weakness, when their infant state
Was unacknowledged, still a doubtful thing,
Because the part of wisdom, and our right.
If we had not thus crushed the serpent's egg,
In five short years we should have had the serpent,
A veritable Dragon, leagued with Powers
Perhaps of Europe, strong on sea as land.
Questions of boundaries, of common rivers,
And, more, of mighty tracts of outer lands,
Were sure to lead to quarrel and to strife,
Unless we basely yielded all things up ;
And that would not have saved us, for the more
The coward yields, the more the haughty soul
Will still demand. We had to fight, oh Lord ;
We could not help it !

MICHAEL.

No, you could not help it—
When things came to the worst. I know that well.
The pride of the South had grown to such a height,
It could no longer brook an equal power
Beside it, and it scorned all peaceful arts,

As if all peace were weak. It sought its doom ;
And it has found it—found repentance too,
And wiser thoughts. And may the lesson endure.
But how grew they so arrogant ? Ask the North,
The Free, the Christian, Money-loving North,
That truckled to them for so many years,
And almost sold its birthright. Ah the wind
Of that wild whirlwind your own falseness sowed.
The evil growth of Slavery could have been
Plucked up with safety, if plucked up in time.
But Northern statesmen cried, “ Let it alone ! ”
And Northern ministers preached, “ ’T is of God ! ”
And the whole North, save here and there a few
Clear-sighted men who were crushed out as vile,
Applauded what their leaders madly said ;
And madly urged that God, in his good time,
Would do away the wrong. God’s time did come ;
It always does come—but a Day of Wrath
And Punishment, it came, and not of Peace !
Had you but done your duty, in the day
When duty called for work and sacrifice,
The war had then been needless.

As it is,

The South is humbled—you are arrogant ;
The South lies trembling—you are stern and proud ;
The South is poor—you rich and confident !
Take care ! take care ! This war has evil seeds.

Corruption stalks abroad, no more ashamed,
 In legislative halls, in marts of trade,
 And gold does sanction all things. Pride doth go
 Before destruction, and a haughty spirit
 Always before a fall—and you are proud,
 And unforgiving, lusting for new wars,
 And keeping open quarrels that you may
 Find an occasion for them. With so much,
 You covet still your neighbour's piece of land;
 While some have made their boast that robbery
 Is in the blood of the race, and to be praised!
 Ah, Job, the war is over—but the seeds
 That war has planted, when will they be dead!

JOB.

And yet we have gained this—the glorious Truth,
 That all men are born equal, we have made
 The undoubted law of this great Western world.
 Is not this much?

MICHAEL.

“All men created equal!”

Suppose we say, All *things* created equal.

A great Truth this, indeed. Compared to God—
 Him, the Eternal and the Infinite!—how small
 The difference between created things!

Well may they be called equal, in that sense—

I, Job, and thou,—and both beside the fly

That sports in the sun! all equal and all naught!

But Truth is many-sided, Job—like life ;
We cannot bound it with one narrow line.
Suppose we also say, then, that all things,
Including men, unequal are created.
This is a great Truth too. Scarcely two things
That God has made, are made with equal powers.
One man can write a book ; another paint
A picture full of life ; one make a watch ;
One play the organ, or compose a strain
Of the most rapturous music ; one a State
Can organize and govern ; one again
Is only fit for ploughing, that he does
With curious skill. In all the varied round
Of practical, busy life, I think, my Job,
It is far wiser thus to keep in mind
That men are made unequal, and with powers
Widely dissimilar, than try to push
This difference out of sight. Of course our God
Could have made men all equal had he chosen,
But as he did not, we shall find it best
To take things as they are. His mighty laws
Cannot be thrust aside, because we doubt
Their Wisdom or their Justice. We must build
On his foundations, the Eternal Rock
Of his Decrees, and not upon the hay
And stubble of our empty theories.

Mark how it works. Why do the veriest fools

Rush in to fill the posts of highest trust,
In your own land, save that they argue thus :—
“ If all men equal are, then why not I
Be one of the Rulers ? ” Bear in mind this, Job,
No State can long exist, that does not hold
As a great Truth, the Difference in men.
A Perfect State should base itself on both
Of these two principles—Men are unequal ;
And men are equal, too. Its aim should be,
To put the proper men in the right place,
In art, in trade, in pulpits, governments,
Not for their own good only, but the good
Of all, and of the State, and of Mankind !
Equality should mean but simply this :—
The equal right of each and every man
To be what God ordained, and gave him power
And faculty to be. He has no right
To do the things he has no skill to do,—
To bungle work of any kind, puffed up
With a false sense of his ability.
Your Eagle will not fly with one wing, Job ;
It needs them both to keep a steady course
Up to the empyrean.

To return

To our high argument. Thou seest now
How often I have stood, and pondered deep
At the parting of the ways. And to this hour

How great my doubt, if I determined well
In opening wide the door 'tween East and West.
I thought I acted wisely—but the deeds,
Oh Job, that have been done in that new world,
New unto you—surpass the wickedest
My fears had imaged ! All I had allowed
For the sure growth of unexpected evil,
That growth of tares which always mars the wheat,
And which no skill or care can guard against,
Bore small proportion to the mighty sweep
Of crime and violence which o'erflooded all,
And floods all still !

JOB.

Oh, why is evil thus
Allowed to ravage this fair universe ?
How can a good and perfect Father see
The growth of hate, the many deeds of blood,
Sickness and pain, and blight of crops and men,
And all that we call Evil, and not speak
The misery and woe out of existence ?
Why is it thus, oh Michael ?

MICHAEL.

Why ?—Oh, Job,
I cannot answer ! In this universe,
So far as I have known it, or have heard,
There is no certain answer—none can say
For *certain* why it is so. All do know

Most surely that it is—as Satan is.

We know it is permitted.

But I breathed

His name—and always that is sure to bring

Him near me. Listen !

*A heavy cloud seems to darken in the distance—and low,
rumbling thunder is heard.*

JOB.

What—can Satan then

Enter in heaven ?

MICHAEL.

Not unless he is called.

But this place is not heaven—only as I

Am here, who always carry the bright scenes

Of heaven around me, wheresoe'er I go.

Fear not—he cannot harm thee.

Thou mayest come !

*The celestial scenery gradually shifts to one side of MICHAEL—
light and flowers and birds and glittering fountains ; while
a dark, gloomy landscape grows up on the other side,
through which beasts and birds of prey can be seen leaping
and flying.*

JOB.

Who is this,

Coming this way ?—so large, and vast, but yet

So mean and misproportioned. And his face,

Handsome, it may be, once—but now so gross,

Rapacious, ugly, cruel. Can this be he,
Whom all men fear?

MICHAEL.

Yes, it is he. The lord
Of disproportion and excess—the foe
Of harmony and moderation wise.
So much the foe, that evil to him seems
Even as good, and better even than good.

[Enter SATAN.

SATAN.

Hail, lord Archangel—you did call my name,
And I a little curious was to learn
What one so mighty 'mong the sons of God
Could find to say to this poor mortal here.
Especially as Satan seemed to be
The subject of your pleasant conversation.

MICHAEL.

Job asked me how it was that Evil could
By a good God be allowed thus to exist.

SATAN.

And you made answer?

MICHAEL.

That I knew not why—
That is for certain—all of us have dreams.
What says the Prince of Evil?

SATAN.

That there is
Nothing like Evil. Everything is good,

And pleasant too, if you know how to take it.
Birds love to sing. My tigers love to tear
The silly sheep. All act as they are made,
And find their joy in doing as they do.
Your dream of goodness is a foolish dream;
God does not change things, thrust the evil out,
What you call evil—there is no such thing—
Because he cannot! For, above his throne,
Are the great laws which hold him subject too.
He can make nothing perfect if he would.
See how the planets wobble in their spheres!
Why do they not run true? for long enough
He has been tinkering at them. Here am I,
An open outlaw, doing my own will;
I grant he is more powerful than I,
But he too has his limits, and I live,
To laugh at his great muddle, and to scorn
His idle claim to wield all-mighty power—
Myself the proof that he is not all-mighty.

MICHAEL.

And yet if Good tends ever to increase,
And grow in power and weight and subtle force;
While Evil—what I call such—tends to shrink
To lesser limits, and grow weak and pale,
Does not this show that the eternal laws
Array themselves in favour of the good,
And, soon or late, the evil thing must die?

Here am I, Michael ; what I was thou knowest,
What I am now thou knowest—have I not
Grown since that day in wisdom and in power ?
And thou, oh Satan, hast thou not decreased
In force and might, howe'er thou may'st deny
The loss of wisdom ?

SATAN.

Did I say, or not,
Your party was the stronger ? One must be
The stronger, one the weaker ; and it chanced
You had the greater number on your side.
Of course you still deprive me, as you can,
Of what belongs to me. But this I say—
You have the will to take my very life,
And yet you cannot. You too have your bounds,
You can or dare not pass. And this fact proves
Your leader not all-mighty. Who can say
But that some hour the wheel of Fate may turn,
And bring me uppermost ?—for chance and change
Seem part of those grand laws which I have said
Even your God must bow to. Then will come
My turn, and what you braggarts now call good
Will be considered evil—and you will be
Yourself a traitor, rebel, Satan, Devil !

MICHAEL.

Remember you, oh Satan, how you looked
When you stood 'mong the angels—none more loved

Among Archangels than their Chief, and none
So absolute in beauty.

SATAN.

Yes, I looked
Like a green fool—a great, conceited fool!
MICHAEL *waves his hand, and a figure forms itself in the air,*
not far from SATAN.

JOB (*to MICHAEL*).

Who is this glorious being? It must be
One of those Princes of the Presence, with
His face all glowing from the sight of God!

MICHAEL.

That was, oh Job, the bright and morning star
Of the assembled angels—Lucifer!
Chief of the Cherubim! Behold him now!
Satan,—thou seest what thou wast—and art!

SATAN.

A silly piece of mummery this. You should
Be 'above such nonsense, Michael. That no doubt
Looks like enough the green and gosling fool
That I was then, before my mind had been
Enlarged by freedom, and the sovereign rule
Of an immense and independent realm.
Look at me now! I only say, myself,
What millions of my sons would gladly say,
If they were here—that I as far exceed
In majesty and true angelic breed,
In all that may denote a sovereign lord,

The weak and fettered thing that you have formed,
 The weak and flimsy thing that once I was,
 As you do that mean mortal by your side.
 It does not show much pride in me I think,
 To say as much as that. And so your weak
 And wretched argument—as personal
 As weak—falls to the ground.

But who is this,

This stupid mortal, who with greedy eyes,
 Drinks in the least you say, as if it were
 A cup of nectar. Ah, I see his race,
 One of those Christians, whom you wisely sent
 To steal and kill across a Continent;
 And who, having destroyed all other men,
 Now turn upon each other. There's a proof
 Of your great wisdom, love, and tenderness,
 My proud Archangel! What is all I do,
 To the doings of your saints? It makes me blush,
 Although not given to blushing as of old,
 When you so much admired me, the mere sight
 Of such wild carnage. Why, the lowest hell
 Cannot reveal its equal—even my tigers here,
 My pretty pets!

*He fondles a couple of tigers, who rub their sleek heads against
 him.*

—do n't tear each other like that.

Is not this mortal one of that bad brood,—

And does he therefore not belong to me?
Saints should play fair, lord Michael.

MICHAEL.

He goes back
Again to earth. And when he dies to earth,
He comes to his own place, where'er that be,
In heaven, or in hell. I want my own,
And only mine—although the day shall come,
As I believe, when all thine shall be mine.

SATAN.

You cannot say that things at present look
Very much like it, Michael. As for me,
I am quite satisfied that every man
Should come to his own place. And you and I
Have had no trouble, since that muss you made
About the soul of Judas. For that other,
The great Jew gun, you know I only claimed
His spirit for a freak. I would not have
That Moses for a gift. I always did
Hate your meek, Quakerish souls.

Turns to JOB.

And as for you,
I mark you well as one of the same breed.
Never you come to me—I'll kick you out.
I warrant I seem to you just what you 've heard
I was—with cloven hoofs, and horns, and tail.—

A set of fools! Now, answer me, you knave.
Do I look like the Devil, or do I not?

MICHAEL.

Answer him, Job.

JOB.

You do look like the Devil.

SATAN.

And ugly, too? With hoofs, and tail, and all?

JOB.

And ugly too, as I conceive of sin.
Lord of Misrule, and Error, and Excess,
You look to me the unhappy thing you are!
I pity you, but cannot help but loathe you.

SATAN.

Impudent liar! And 't were not that the power
Of Michael shielded you, I'd strike you down
To the lowest deep of hell. Beware the hour
You come to me, you false, blasphemous wretch!

MICHAEL.

Enough! you asked a question, and were told
The simple truth, as it appeared to him.
Would you ask further, either of him or me?

SATAN.

Such are the gentle manners of the Saints!
What high-toned courtesy! What fear to give
Needless offence! If such the customs now

Within the heavens, how much they have improved
 Since I was wont to tread the crystal courts.
 But I suppose it is another proof
 How greatly all the sons of God have grown
 In wisdom and in goodness. Come to hell,
 Michael, some day, and we will try to teach
 Your lordship better manners.

And a word—

We will not slander you behind your back ;
 As you were doing to me not long ago.
 If Devil's but another little word
 For Slanderer, who then is truly Devil ?
 A riddle for the saints that. Fare-you-well,
 My lord Archangel !

To JOB.

As for you, you rogue,
 I'll grind you some day !

SATAN *departs—and the infernal scenery gives place to the celestial.*

JOB.

Did I answer right ?
 He is a terrible spirit !

MICHAEL.

Thou didst well.
 There is a time for all things—for the Truth,

As well as Courtesy. As for his threats,
Regard them not. My arm is all around thee.
He shall not injure one hair of thy head,
Unless thou giv'st him power. Beware of that!

JOB.

His power has worked me harm enough already.
My boughs are all stripped from me—oh, my wife,
My children! On my knees I pray thee, Lord,
Undo his work, and bid the dumb, cold grave
Give up its dead!

MICHAEL.

I may not do it, Job.

It were not best either for thee or them!
Thy loved ones died accordant with those laws
Which regulate the earth—and yet they died
That it might better be for them and thee,
And for the world of men. No special spite
Of Satan cut them off—and happier now,
Far happier, they are, than when on earth.
The Lord had other use for them, and took
What he had lent thee. Canst thou longer wish
To have them back? It were a selfish love,
Unworthy Job. The time shall come when thou
Shalt go to them—and on thy dying eyes
Shall beam their gladsome faces, and across
The stream of death their hands shall lead thee on,

And thus thy soul shall tread the darksome vale,
And reach the gates of heaven without a fear.

JOB.

I am content, oh Lord—knowing that they
Are happier than with me. But bid the days
Pass quickly till I see them.

MICHAEL.

Bide thy time.

My time, and God's, is best. Thou hast thy work.
The words which fell from lips of prosperous Job,
Will fall with tenfold force from out the lips
Of Job the unfortunate, who preaches still
The same great lessons. Men will trust the faith
That bears a man thus up, amid the storms
And whirlwinds of the world. The wounds of Fate
Were needful thus to make complete thy life.
For he who can be good, and wise, and true
Amidst his adverse fortunes—when all things
Seem to conspire against him—he is good
And wise indeed ; and his foundations are
Based beyond doubt upon the eternal rock,
Whose builder is the Everlasting God.

One word before we part. I would make clear,
So far as I have seen, the cause and scope
Of Evil. As I have said, the Mystery
Is one, which in its utmost depth and breadth

O'erpowers the Angels—answer there is none
In fullness, only in part.

Every sweet bliss
Would seem to have its bitter, as a portion
Even of its essence. Who that wakes to love,
But opens a fresh door to sorrow too?
The pang of absence, and the bitterer pang
Of love that meets not with its full return.
The heart made tender to the slightest blow
From the beloved hand. And then the sting
Of jealousy, which even the angels feel
In the lower spheres. And so with every love,
Motherhood not excepted. As the child
Passes into its mother's arms, and joy
Like heaven is hers—so spring up a new crop
Of troubles and anxieties to mar
Her future peace. No bliss is unalloyed—
Pleasure and Pain twin-sisters almost seem.
But why? I answer thus:—

God has made men
And angels in the likeness of himself.
That is—made them, in large or small degree,
Free Agents like himself. With absolute,
Unfettered power within a certain range,
To act at will, to choose the right or wrong,
The best or worst. If it be asked by some,
Why God should make man thus, my answer is,

He who is Infinitely Wise, thought well
To do it—knowing surely on the whole,
That course was best—knowing that only thus
Could beings made in the image of himself,
True sons of God, exist—and knowing more
Than we can ever dream of knowing, how
The consummation would forever justify
The wisdom of the plan.

But to resume.

This natural seed of God in every one,
Has power of growth, and also of decay,
Proportioned to the laws by which it lives.
Thou sawest Satan, what he was and is !
The same is true of every child of God.
Act well and wisely, and thou shalt increase !
Act foolishly and wrong, and thou shalt fail
In strength and wisdom with each passing year !
Whether all Evil thus the offspring is
Of Free-Will working wrongly—and would end
If Sin and blind Unwisdom ended—or, sad thought,
A part of Nature's laws, which would endure
Even if men and angels all were good
And wise, I know not.

Neither is there need—

For men and angels never can be wise
And good, in the highest sense. Compared with
Him,

The Infinitely Wise and Just and Good,
They always will be foolish and imperfect—
And thus will always fail to do those things
Which are exactly right; and thus will Evil,
As a direct result of their Free Will,
Their power to choose, be always in the world.
In all the worlds! Save in that inmost sphere
Where God does reign alone! Small and more small,
The dross of Evil grows, as we ascend
To higher and higher spheres of thought and deed,
But still it must exist in its degree,
Until we reach Perfection—which is God!

Even here is doubt. For Raphael sadly thinks,
Evil and Sorrow pierce and break within
The inmost sphere eternal. For he says,
The awful cruelties of wicked men,
And more, the sins and wickedness of those
Who should be saints, and always love the Right,
Cannot but grieve the holy spirit of God!
Whose pain must be as infinite and vast
As is his joy at goodness—so that He
Himself doth agonize o'er guilty souls
With groanings which cannot be uttered. Oh!
If this be so, and even the spirit of God
Is pained at our departures from the Right,
How fearful should we be with loving fear,
Lest we give pain to him who gives us all,

And loves us with a love as infinite
As his own being !

After a pause.

But I reason thus.

If I am right, or Raphael, who can tell ?
It seems to me that God who is All-Wise,
And sees the end from the beginning, dwells
In perfect glory, happiness and peace,
Knowing that all is Right, and all is Well,
And all is, in its wholeness, Perfect Love !
None else can feel thus, for none else can see
His perfect plan, in its Infinitude.
And what is infinite, the Infinite
Alone can comprehend. Therefore the gush
Of Perfect Joy, that feels that all is best,
Forever thrills and swells the Eternal Mind.

So it appears to me. And yet I know
It is impossible for me to know
The Truth in fullness. How can such as I,
Who am not God, but only Archangel,
Grasp in the full that wisdom which is His ?
And yet it is not wrong, but is my right,
And pleasing well to Him, to grasp as much
Of His truth as I can. For thus we grow
In wisdom and in stature, reaching up
Toward the far heights of God !

And now we part.

In hours to come these teachings high recall,
From time to time—not careful for the words,
Nor seeking to bind tight in iron links
The substance of my thought. But let it lie,
As loose as seeds are scattered, in thy mind.
So best the spirit of it wilt thou take
Into thy inmost being, and not press
The vital essence from it. Thus 't will grow
Like healthy, vigorous seed, and bring forth fruit,
Even an hundred fold!

I leave thee Peace!

That Peace which passeth knowledge.

Fare-thee-well!

As Michael ceased to speak, his face and form
And the whole landscape round him, seemed to fade
From the sight of Job, as fades from out the screen
The figures of the Stereopticon,—
Nor knew Job whether all had fled away,
Or simply melted, as it were, to mist,
To which succeeded darkness as of night.
And then Job knew no more—for o'er his sense,
Fatigued by his high converse, and the strain
To which his nature had been put, there came

A faintness as of death. And he sank down
Insensible—and knew of nothing more.

When Job awoke the morning sun shone bright
Into his room. He heard without the gay
And gladsome twitter of the nesting birds ;
And the rich, liquid notes of the Wood-Thrush
Fell like a heavenly strain upon his ear.
A new life seemed to stir his blood—his eyes
Were full of their old fire—and in his face
Was creeping the old bloom. He rose at once ;
And though his boils still gave him pain at times,
And his limbs ached a little as he walked,
He felt the evil day was passing by.
Soon Judas entered. And Job welcomed him
So heartily and blithely, that the Dwarf
Stopped short in wonder—gazing as in doubt
That Job still kept his reason. But he saw
The change was real, and marvelled much thereat.
For surely never had a Doctor's drug
Been proved so potent, curing as at once,
Hurt body and hurt mind.

Choosing his times,
Job told his story—Judas laughing first,
Then hearing gravely—for some portions touched
A chord in his own soul, a chord which seemed
Woven in some strange way with Miriam's hair.

And he believed, at last, that whether Job
Had dreamed the Vision, or had seen indeed
And listened to the great and mighty Lord
Of earth and man, the teachings he had heard
Were sober Truth, and were no dream nor lie;
But such as men would find of proper scope
To live and die by—and would make them wise
In thought and deed; and charitable, too,
To all of every race, and creed, and clime.

So these two went together, and abode
In Judas's new cottage, where their life
Passed on in peace. Sufficient for their needs
The product of their garden, with a sum
Which yearly came to Job, saved from the wreck
Of his estate, and something Judas had
Of old at interest. But their wants were small
As were their means.

But rich were both, and Job
Exceeding rich, in Wisdom, and the power
To quick discern all spirits, and to tell
As by a glance the true coin from the false.
To Job, the Wise and Good, the neighbours brought
All quarrels and disputes, as to a Judge
Almost infallible, and free from guile.
And of the Truth that the Archangel spake,
He sowed abroad the seeds—and in himself

Strove to embody all that glorious Truth,
And more harmonious grow from day to day.

And thus with Judas. He had cast aside
His bitterness of thought, and temper too ;
And men who knew him well, and children all
Began to love him, seeing in his face
The soul o'erpowering all the mire of clay.

Job lived to threescore years—scarce touched by
age,

Mature in soul and body—but the Lord
Had need of him. A year ago he died.
One night he went to bed, and in the morn
His spirit was not. Happy is sudden death
To him all ready for the blissful change—
Who says “Good Night” to man, “Good Morning” to
The Angels !

Judah still doth ripen on.

Around his neck he wears the chain of hair,
The circle and the cross, which Miriam gave.
And he will wear that pledge until he dies ;
And after that, if so the angels please.
For he believes that with this earthly life
He shall cast off his low and grovelling shape,
And comely be, in measure small or great,
Accordant with his spirit, and its growth
In goodness and completeness. So she said,

Miriam, his prophetess ! and so said Job ;
And so says his own soul !

Such is the story
Of Job, the Modern. Be it false, or true,
The hearts of men will tell—in all of which
God has his witness, pleading for the Truth.
He that has ears to hear, then, let him hear !

THE END.

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